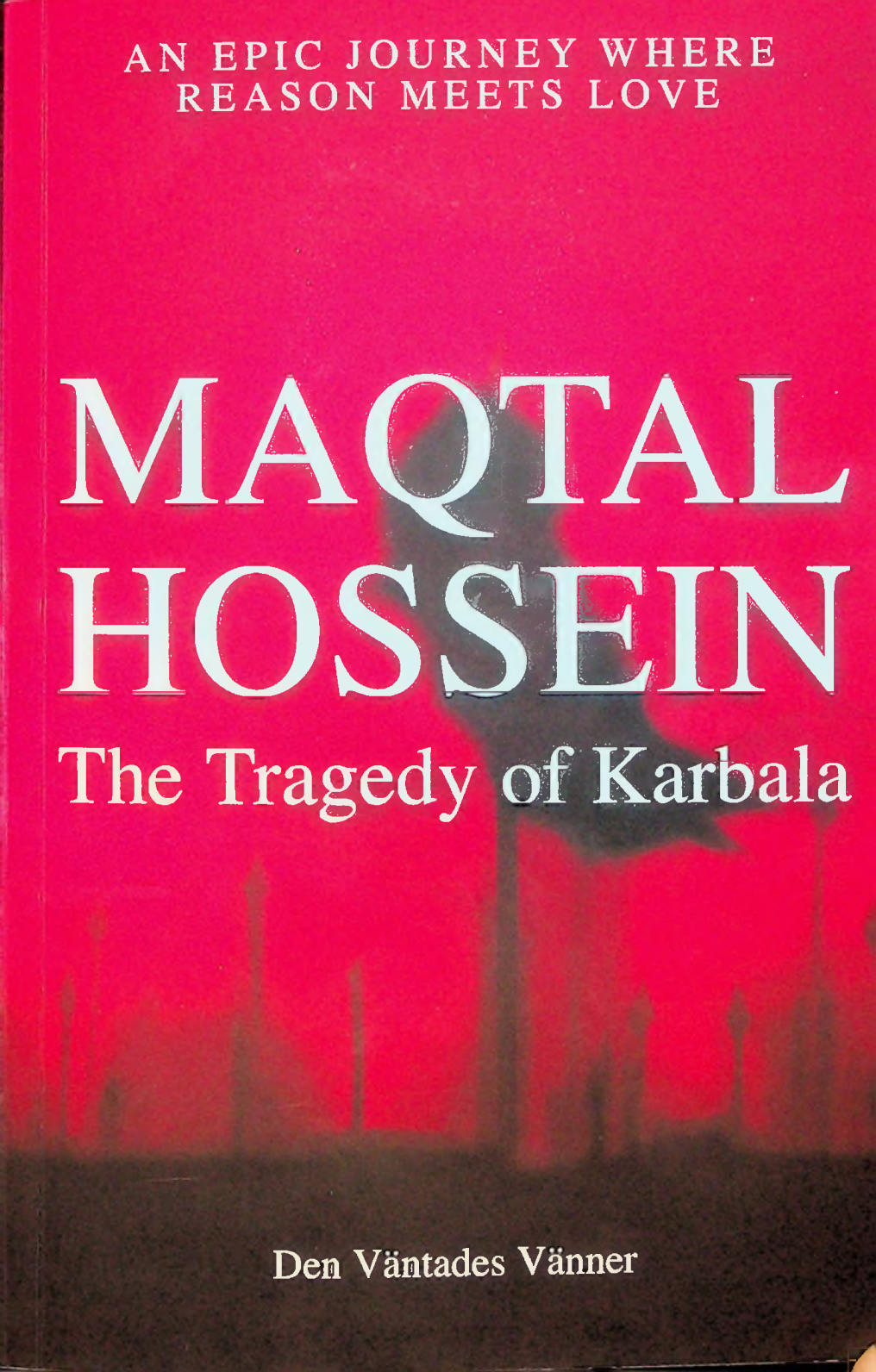
AN EPIC JOURNEY WHERE REASON MEETS LOVE

MAQTAL HOSSEIN

The Tragedy of Karbala



Den Väntades Vänner

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Love, unaware of itself, asked,
"What is love?"

Imam Hossein replied,
"Look at me and learn!"

PROLOGUE

Ibn Abbas was known for his intellect. When asked a question, people would receive an enlightened answer. He would usually be sent away to different destination to discuss various topics. He surpassed all debates and academics. However, on the 8th of Thul-Hijjah in the year 60 A.H. (after Hijrah i.e., after the Prophet's(S) emigration from Mecca to Medina), Imam Hossein(A) decided to cancel his Hajj (pilgrimage) and head towards Karbala. Ibn Abbas, cousin to Imam Hossein's(A) father, decided to meet up.
"But why would you go?" Ibn Abbas asked emotionally, "The end to this path leads to martyrdom!"
"Because God wishes to see me as a martyr," Imam Hossein(A) replied.
"But then why take the women and children with you?!" Ibn Abbas asked again.
"Because God wishes to see them captured," replied Imam Hossein(A) and thereafter embarked on his legendary journey.
Ibn Abbas was known for his intellect, however on that day, his intellect stood baffled before that expression of pure love.

Imam Hossein(A) chose a path which none before him ever had nor after him will ever chose. It was not only Ibn Abbas that was left puzzled; the whole Islamic nation had been left bewildered. To this day, when reflecting upon the actions of Imam Hossein(A) and his followers, you are left in that same state. What changed their hearts and motivated them? How could they do

what they did? What did God want from them and why did He want it?

The definition of love

Ishq is the most powerful word, which is usually used to describe intense love. The Quran itself uses a milder word, *hobb*, to describe it:

> *But those who believe are stronger in love for Allah (ashaddo hobban)"*
> *(2:165)*

A young scholar decided to explore the term *ishq's* expression in various ahadith. In those days, computers were non-existent, so he had to go through all ahadith collections by hand and when done, he reached the conclusion that *ishq* occurs merely 4-5 times in both a positive and negative context.

Lexicographically, *ishq* originates from *ashaqa.* When grass loses its colour and turns yellow, it's called *ashaqa.* Therefore, *ishq,* when it overtakes a man, is what makes him completely lose his colour and shape. Like the straw of grass turning yellow in its longing for water, he too passes on to another phase.

Spiritually, *ishq* is an extension of *aql*, the voice of reason. Where *aql* reaches its limits, *ishq* begins. Many poets and mystics describe *ishq* as something beyond *aql,* thus not in conflict with reason but an extension of it and beyond. The basis of *ishq* is therefore *aql,* and when

reason crosses over to love, there is *nozool*, the descent of blessings in form of *mokashefat,* spiritual disclosures and revelations, and *shohood*, spiritual visions and attestation.

Reason is powerless in the expression of love. Love alone is capable of revealing the truth of love and being a lover. The way of our prophets, is the way of truth. If you want to live, die in love; die in love if you want to truly live.

- Rumi

Dark clouds

Over 100,000 Muslims gathered and participated in the Prophet's(S) last pilgrimage, in the year 10 A.H. After the rituals were performed and before all Muslims would separate to journey back home, the Prophet(S) set up a camp by the-pond of Ghadir Khumm. It was a Friday, on the 18th of Thul-Hijjah, equivalent to the month of March. Even though the scent of spring could be felt in the winds, something was preventing the Prophet(S) from declaring the important message that would come to complete the whole religion.

> *O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people! (5:67)*

Perhaps, the Prophet(S) in that very moment, beheld dark clouds that would soon dominate the clear skies. Announcing the *wilayah* and leadership of Ali b. Abu Talib(A) would subsequently end with Imam Hossein's(A) head raised on spears 52 years later.

And surely, on the day of the Prophet's(S) passing – 70 days following his announcement of Imam Ali's(A) divine leadership of the Islamic nation – a storm blew up

in Saqifa, where the road became muddy and dark clouds covered the bright sky.

It would take the Muslims' [need to capitalize religion and its followers] 25 years of darkness before they would turn to Imam Ali(A), clench his cloak and refuse to let go, until he would accept the caliphate. However, during those 25 years, much had happened. Ahadith were banned, followers were scattered, and a parallel rule was established in *Shaam*, the region of today's Syria, with Mu'awiyah in charge and a powerful propaganda machine behind him. Furthermore, a new generation of Muslims, *tabi'un* were born, who had not met the Prophet(S). During the brief five-year rule of Imam Ali(A), he was afflicted with three civil wars; the first ones in the history of Islam. When he was mercilessly killed, 40 years A.H., in cold-blood during prayers in the mosque of Kufa, having the archangel Jibrail lament his grief, causing every inhabitant of Kufa to fall in to tears, the Syrians exclaimed, "Did Ali b. Abu Talib die in the mosque?! Did he even use to pray?!"

Mu'awiyah's seemingly Islamic rule, which was corrupt to the core, continued to reign for 20 more years. For 20 years, darkness veiled the sun of guidance and clarity. During this period, there was a reoccurring theme of how Shaam people would come to Mecca and Medina, run into Imam Hassan(A) to express hideous words to him, to only then be met by his exemplary and beautiful treatment, which would then convert their beliefs immediately.

When Mu'awiyah eventually died in the year 60 A.H., the caliphate was decided to pass on to Imam Hossein(A), accordingly to the treaty agreements. The treaty between Mu'awiyah and Imam Hassan(A) included this condition. However, his son Yazid decided, as his father and his grandfather Abu Sufyan before him, to take matters into his own hands and declare himself as a caliph. Yazid did not stop there, he extended his viciousness by publicly desecrating the visible aspects of Islam and by defying his father's advice in demanding the allegiance of Imam Hossein(A) and acceptance of his open corrupt rule. That is when he had crossed the ultimate line.

Ink or blood

Among the first things Yazid did was to write a letter addressed to his own cousin, the governor of Medina, Walid b. Utba b. Abu Sufyan, where he ordered him to claim an allegiance from the inhabitants of Medina and especially Imam Hossein's(A) followers or Imam Hossein(A). The demand was between life and death; either Imam Hossein's(A) signature or his head.

Walid consulted none other than one with a stained history regarding his behaviour towards the Prophet(S) and his family – Marwan b. Hakam. Marwan and his father were sent together in exile to Ta'if, by the Prophet(S) himself, as a punishment to their aggressive resistance. The third caliph, Uthman b. Affan, Marwan's cousin, was the first to lift the exile, thus welcoming him

right back. In the wars of Jamal and Siffin, Marwan drew his sword against Imam Ali(A). Later, when Imam Hassan(A) was to be buried next to the grave of his grandfather, the Prophet(S), Marwan objected to the extent that arrows were fired towards the Bani Hashim, forcing Imam Hossein(A) and Abbas to bury their brother in the cemetery of Baqi.
Hence, by Walid consulting Marwan, one should not be baffled by his reply, as he said, "Hossein will not give his allegiance, and if I were you, I would rather cut off his head!".
Walid, during his time in Medina, must have seen something in Imam Hossein(A), because now he could feel the pressure, pushing him into a corner, with the demand of him doing something he viewed as an impossibility. "I wish my mother had not given birth to me, I wish I was not alive!", he mumbled in answer.

The governor summoned Imam Hossein(A) and he answered his call; however, the Imam(A) did not go alone. Alongside him were 30 men from Bani Hashim (descendants of Hashim – the great-grandfather of the Prophet(S)), amongst them was also his brother Abbas. Why, would one ask, did the Imam(A) not go alone? This confirms how the Imam(A), from the very beginning took all the means necessary for his blood not to be spilled in vain.
Walid informed Imam Hossein(A) of Mu'awiyah's death and Yazid's demand of the Imam's(A) allegiance to him. But Marwan could not contain himself, and driven by his spite, he added, "O emir! Do not accept his excuses and if he refuses, decapitate him!"

It was as if they had already aimed for the head of Imam Hossein(A) from the very beginning.

However, Bani Hashim stood up, indicating their presence as shields for their Imam(A). Imam Hossein(A) then exclaimed, "Woe upon you, you son of an illegitimate! You order my decapitation?! You are a liar and you have, by God, displayed your evil."
Imam Hossein(A) then turned towards Walid and said, "O emir! We are members of the family of the Holy Prophet(S). We are the source of prophethood and our home is a passage for the angels. God began with us and completed as well with us the divine knowledge. Yazid is a man of parties, a drunkard, a murderer, and he has spilled the blood of many holy people. All of these factors have made him unworthy of the caliphate. A person like *me* can never give allegiance to a person like *him*. Nonetheless, I shall think about this matter till tomorrow to see who is worthy of the caliphate." Imam Hossein(A) then left the gathering, closely followed by the Bani Hashim. Despite his significant position, Imam Hossein(A) added that he would consider the matter once again and as such, demonstrated he did all he could to avoid bloodshed.
When the Imam(A) left, Marwan quickly confronted Walid, saying, "You did not follow my advice?!"
Walid refuted, "Woe upon you! With your advice, you would have destroyed my life in this world and in the next! By God, I do not want a worldly kingdom by spilling the blood of Hossein! By God, my faith is that if a person meets God with the sin of spilling the blood of

Hossein, the scale of his crimes will weigh heavier. God will discard this person and punish him in hell!"
But Marwan did not give up; when Imam Hossein(A) left his house the next morning, Marwan was there. He told the Imam, "Aba Abdullah! I want to advice you. Listen to me and accept it!"
The Imam(A) replied, "Let us hear it."
Marwan proceeded, "I advise you to give your allegiance to Yazid, Amir al-mo'menin. It is better for you in this world and in the next."
Imam Hossein(A) replied, "*Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'on* (Verily, we belong to God and to Him we return). When the nation falls into the hands of men like Yazid, it will be the end of Islam! Truly, I have heard my grandfather, the Holy Prophet(S), say that the caliphate is forbidden for the household of Abu Sufyan!"
Marwan's effort to persuade Imam Hossein(A) eventually failed, hence making him frustrated and leaving the Imam.

The next morning Imam Hossein(A) bid farewell to Medina and embarked on his journey towards Mecca; it was on his birthday, the 3rd of Sha'ban, in the year 60 A.H. On the birth of Imam Hossein(A), 54 years earlier, his infant face was filled with the kisses and tears of the Holy Prophet(S), who at that point already informed his mother and father of what was awaiting their little boy. The time had now come for him to embark on this journey, one he had waited for, his entire life.
Imam Hossein(A) was still in Mecca during Sha'ban, Ramadan and Thul-Qe'da. Three well-known Abdullahs visited the Imam(A). Abdullah b. Abbas and Abdullah b.

Zubayr asked him to settle in Medina but were met with, "I am merely performing the duty the Prophet(S) ordered me to." Abdullah b. Omar also met the Imam and asked Imam Hossein(A) to ally himself with the corrupt rule in order to avoid war and bloodshed, to which the Imam(A) replied "O Abu Abdul-Rahman! Do you not know that this a worthless world that caused men to stoop so low that the head of Yahya b. Zakariyah (John the Baptist) was given as a present to one of the illegitimates among the Israelites? Do you not know that the Israelites killed seventy prophets, from dawn till sunrise, during a single day and yet, returned to buy and sell as if nothing had happened? But God did not hasten their punishment and instead punished them severely after some time – a firm punishment from God, the Elevated. O Abu Abdul-Rahman! Fear God and do not abstain from aiding me!"

CHAPTER 1: KUFA

The plead of the Kufans

The people of Kufa heard of Imam Hossein's(A) arrival to Mecca and his refusal to give allegiance to Yazid. Many people gathered at Sulayman b. Surad Khozaei, the religious leader's home. Sulayman stood up and gave a speech and ended by saying, "O Shia! You know that Mu'awiyah has died and that he is answering for his deeds. He has placed his son, Yazid, on the throne. Here is Hossein who has refused to acknowledge him and he has left for Mecca because of the rebellious Umayyads. You are his followers and the followers of his father. Today he needs your help, so contemplate on this! If you can fight with him against his enemies, inform him. If not, if you are lazy, divided and scared, [at least] do not leave him with your egoistic satisfactions!"

The gatherings collective emotions were stirred and thereupon they sent a letter to Imam Hossein(A), in which they pleaded for his help, stating:

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Sent with respect to Imam Hossein b. Ali Amir al-mo'menin, from Sulayman b. Surad Khozaei, Musayyab b. Najbah, Rafah b. Shaddad, Habib b. Mazaher, Abdullah b. Vail and the rest of your Shia:

God's peace be upon you! All praise belongs to God who defeated your enemy and the enemy of your father, an enemy who was selfish, arrogant and a jealous oppressor, who with force deprived us of our rights. An enemy who was a regent without the approval of society, who killed the good amongst the people but who kept the bad ones alive and who handed over the treasury to insurgents and dictators, and that is why we wish that he is chased away from the mercy of God, just like the people of Thamud. We now have no other leader than you. So please, come to us so that God can, through you, gather us for the truth. (The governor) No'man b. Bashir has been left here alone in the Government palace and we are not standing by his side during the Friday prayers and other ceremonies. If we find out that you are headed towards us, we shall drive him out to Shaam. Blessings and salutations to you in advance, O son of the Prophet(S), and may God have mercy upon you and your father, and there is no strength and power except with God, the Most High, the Supreme.

After two days, people sent 150 letters, via another group, which were signed by either one, two, three or four people. Everyone who signed the letters pleaded to the Imam(A) to come to Kufa. Although Imam Hossein(A) did not respond to any of those letters, they did not stop coming. The next batch of delivery contained 600 letters. And so, it continued until the number of letters exceeded 12,000! The last mailmen from Kufa were Hani b. Hani as-Sab'i and Said b. Abdullah al-Hanafi who brought the following letters, which were among the last pleads by the Kufans:

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

To Hossein b. Amir al-mo'menin, from his Shia and the Shia of Amir al-mo'menin.
Now all the people are expecting you, and they have none other than you in their thoughts regarding leadership.
So please hurry, O son of the Holy Prophet(S)! The gardens and fields are green and filled with fruits. The lands are full of grass and the trees have budging branches and leaves. Come here whenever you wish to so that you may lead a prepared army!
Salutations, in advance, upon you and your father!

After reading the letter, Imam Hossein(A) stood up and prayed beside the Ka'ba, between the *rukn* and *maqam.* One cannot but wonder what Imam Hossein(A) felt at that moment. On one hand, he had the spies and assassins of Yazid after him, and on the other hand, the Kufans were pleading for his arrival. And yet, with their past, he could not take their word for it. The fact that the Imam(A) turned to prayers might indicate the severity of the situation. He called his cousin, Muslim b. Aqil aside, told him about the situation and decided to send him to Kufa to find out its true state.

Thousands upon thousands of long and pleading letters were answered with this single sentence by the Imam(A):

I am sending Muslim b. Aqil to you so that he may deliver your opinions and your belief to me.

A network of darkness and light

Muslim b. Aqil had an extremely close relationship with his uncle Imam Ali(A). He followed his master everywhere and was by his side during the war in Siffin. He also married Roqayya, the daughter of Imam Ali(A). Muslim was therefore more than just a cousin of Imam Hossein(A), he was like a brother who was raised by the same father. When he later got the mission to deliver the letter of Imam Hossein(A), he tirelessly rode to Kufa. The reception was overwhelming. They invited Muslim to stay in the house of Mokhtar b. Abu Ubaidah Thaqafi

and the Shias started to visit. When people had gathered around Muslim, he read the letter of Imam Hossein(A) and after that 18,000 people gave allegiance to him. However, the spies of Yazid were spying on the event and Abdullah b. Muslim al-Bahili, Ammarah b. Walid, and Omar b. Sa'd wrote a letter to Yazid, informing him of Muslim b. Aqil and the situation in Kufa. They recommended him to remove No'man b. Bashir and replace him with someone else. Yazid consulted his Christian adviser Sergiu b. Al-Mansur who proposed that Ubaydullah b. Ziyad, who was notorious for his skill in crushing rebellions, ought to be sent to Kufa. Yazid had originally, in connection with the death of his father Mu'awiyah, planned to remove Ibn Ziyad from the governance of Basra, but now followed the advice of Sergiu, he [Yazid] sent a letter to Ibn Ziyad, explaining to him the expansion of his governance to now include Kufa. He told him as well to make a quick arrest of Muslim and kill him, before the situation would get out of control.

Nevertheless, Imam Hossein(A) also had his network. He wrote letters to the noblemen in Basra, which were sent to them via one of the companions of the Imam, Sulayman Abarzin, inviting them to join his movement. He reminded them of their responsibilities in complying with their Imam's(A) requests. This group included Yazid b. Mas'od Nahsali and Mundhir b. Jarood Abdi.

Yazid b. Mas'od gathered the tribes of Bani Tamim, Bani Hanzala, and Bani Sa'd, and said to them, "O Bani

Tamim! How do you find my character, my behaviour, my family, and my nobility amongst you?"
"Exceptional! You are the pillar, the holder of all capabilities, you have the highest dignity, and you are the epitome of nobility." they replied.
He then said, "I have gathered you here in order to hear your opinions and to receive your assistance regarding an important matter."
They replied, "By God, we will do our best to express our opinions. Tell us!"
Yazid b. Mas'od gathered his courage and spoke, "Truly, God has taken Mu'awiyah to shame and destruction! It was he who opened the floodgates to sins and oppressions, and it was he who set the foundation of tyranny. He forced it upon people, to give their oath of allegiance to his son, and he made himself believe that he had created a solid state. Woe be upon what he had planned! He put in the effort, but he failed! He asked for advice but received no support! His son, the drunkard Yazid, who leads in all kinds of evil and sins, now claim that he is the caliph of the Muslims and that he wishes to govern them without their consent or approval. This is due to his lack of awareness in the path of truth; he lacks in both knowledge and tolerance. I believe that fighting Yazid is more urgent than fighting the polytheists!

And here is Hossein b. Ali, the grandson of the Prophet(S), who holds nobility, dignity and wisdom! His distinctions are beyond the ability of the pen to describe and beyond the power of the tongue to express! He is an ocean of knowledge without a shore! He is the most suitable person for the caliphate. He holds a radiant list

of merits, an age full of experience, a lovely descent and an honourable lineage! He cares for the youth and he is benevolent towards the elders. How wonderful had it not been if the people had a leader like him and if he had been the Imam of this nation?! God has proclaimed his call binding and his speech irresistible.
Do not run away from the divine light and do not fumble in the darkness of falsehood! It was Sakhr b. Qais who brought you the shame for abstaining from the war of Jamal (war of the camel). Today you have the possibility to cleanse yourselves by standing up to support the son of the Prophet(S)! By God, only humiliation and inadequacy await him and his family who abstains from helping him. Testify now! I am the one who wears the clothes and armour of war! The one who does not become a martyr will die and the one who runs will surely face death. May God have mercy upon you, reply with a positive answer!"

Bani Hanzala said, "We have always been the arrows to your bow and the horsemen of your tribe. When you fight with us, you will win and conquer. If you experience hardships then we will be with you once again and help you with our swords, and protect you even if it costs us our lives. Thus, we shall support you in whatever you may wish for!"

Bani Sa'd stood up and said, "O Abu Khalid, in our opinion, the most improper deed is to oppose you and to disobey your words and opinions. Sakhr b. Qais ordered us to abandon warfare and by abiding the order, we would have maintained our honour and pride. Please, let

us consult each other so that we may inform you of our decision."
Bani Amer b. Tamim spoke thereafter, "O Abu Khalid! We are your allies and the relatives of your father. We do not like to be pleased and quiet while you are upset. Every single one of your commands are truthful. Hence, call upon us and let us answer, and give us commands so that we may obey! Give us orders as you please, it is in your hands!"
When Yazid b. Mas'od heard their response, he told Banu Sa'd, "O Banu Sa'd! If you obey the command, God will not deprive you of power or swords! It will forever remain in your hands!" He then answered the letter of Imam Hossein(A):

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

I have been honoured by your elegant letter and I have come to know of its content, in which you have called upon me and invited me to benefit in obedience to you, and gaining happiness by serving your honour. God, the Exalted, never clears the world from a doer of good and one who guides towards salvation. You are God's perfect sign for the entirety of creation and His chosen one on earth. Yes, you are of the fruitful branches of the prophetic olive tree which was planted by the Holy Prophet(S)

himself. The high soaring bird acquires its elegant flight by your holy hand! I have made Bani Tamim at your service and they are your absolute and complete followers. They rush to your obedience, just like a thirsty camel seeking water. I hand over the obedience of Bani Sa'd to you; the inner filth of their souls has been washed away, shining bright for every eye to witness"

The way in which Yazid b. Mas'od expressed himself moved Imam Hossein(A) to the extent that he decided to offer a special prayer in his name after finishing writing the letter; "May God protect you on the horrific Day and may He allow you to quench your thirst on the Day of extreme thirst!"

Alone before the emir

The following morning, Ubaydullah b. Ziyad appointed his brother Uthman b. Ziyad for the post in Basra and headed for Kufa. He waited outside the city until nightfall and masking himself with a veil like a woman, he entered the city. Some had surrounded Dar-ol Emarah, the palace of the Emir, and were protesting, but they were rather simple-minded. When they saw the masked Ibn Ziyad, disguised by darkness, they thought it was Imam Hossein(A) who had arrived, and thus started celebrating. They let Ibn Ziyad pass, who thereafter, all by himself, managed to enter the palace without any

difficulties. He went to the city mosque in the morning, where he held a threatening speech, warning for any disobedience against the governor and promised rewards for those who obeyed.

When Muslim b. Aqil came to know this, he took precautions and left Mukthar's home for the home of Hani b. Urwa. Hani welcomed him warmly. The Shias had started gathering in the home of Hani. However, Ibn Ziyad had eyes and ears everywhere. Ibn Ziyad and Hani were acquainted before and when Ibn Ziyad found out that Muslim was living in the house of Hani, he summoned Mohammad b. Ash'ath, Asma b. Kharja, and Amr b. Hajjaj, and asked as to what was going on and why Hani had not come to visit him.
"We do not know, they answered. Rumour is that he is sick."
"I have heard that he is recovered and that he is sitting by the door of his home", said Ziyad. If we know that he is not sick, let us then go and meet him. Go to him and remind him not to ignore our rights. Since he is a noble Arab, I would not like it for him to be convicted for corruption."

The three of them then went to visit Hani at his place, stayed with him for a while and asked him as to what had happened, saying, "Ibn Ziyad remembered you and has asked for you. For if he knew you were sick, he would have come to visit you." Hani said, "Sickness has prevented me."
"He has heard that you have recovered and that you are sitting by the door of your home at night. The governor

will not tolerate harm or disloyalty, especially from someone like you. You are a nobleman amongst your peers. Under oath we ask you to stand up and come with us to go and meet him."
Hani got dressed and rode off alongside his nephew. When they reached the palace, Hani was taken with unease and told his nephew Hassan b. Asma ibn Khariji, who did not know what was going on, "Nephew! By God I fear this man. What are your thoughts?"
"Do not worry uncle! I am not worried for you", the nephew replied. Hani arrived to Ubaydullah b. Ziyad along with his companions. When Ubaydullah spotted Hani, he said the Arabic proverb, "Dishonesty has brough him to you.". Then Ibn Ziyad turned to his judge Shureih, who was sitting next to him, pointed at Hani and recited the following verse from the poem of Madi Karb Zubeidi:

"I seek his pleasure while he seeks my death,
Now from your fellow you have an excuse
To carry out what you intend to do."

"What happened to the emir?" asked Hani.
To which Ibn Ziyad replied, "Be quiet, Hani! What is going in your house against Amir al-mo'menin and the Muslims? You brought Muslim b. Aqil to your house. Are you gathering warriors and weapons for him?!"
Hani exclaimed, "I have not done anything!"
"Call upon my servant, Ma'qqal."
Ma'qqal was a spy of Ibn Ziyad's who knew most of the secrets of what was occurring in Hani's house. Ma'qqal stepped forward and stood close to Ibn Ziyad. When

Hani saw Ma`qqal, he realised that he was a spy of Ibn Ziyad and said, "By God! I have neither called Muslim to my home, nor have I encouraged him to revolt. But he took shelter in my home. I was ashamed to deny him this. According to Arab customs, this sheltering made me responsible for him. Now that you have heard of this, let me go and help him leave my home so that he may go wherever he wishes, and my responsibilities towards him reach its end."

"No, by God! You may not leave this place until you hand over Muslim to me."

"No, by God! I will never perform such a shameless act! I cannot hand over my guest to you and have you killing him."

Ibn Ziyad burst out, "By God, you have to hand him over!"

But Hani stood tall, "But that I shall never do!"

The dialogue became a drivel without any of them giving in. Muslim b. Amr Bahli stood up and said, "If the emir allows it, may I speak with Hani in private?"

They went aside to a place where they were still visible to Ibn Ziyad for a private conversation. However, their conversation heated up and started turning louder and eventually Ibn Ziyad could hear it all.

Muslim b. Amr Bahli pleaded to Hani, "O Hani, I swear by God. Do not kill yourself and do not start any trouble for your tribe. I am afraid that you will be killed. Ibn Ziyad will never hurt or kill Muslim! Hand him over so that his actions may not cause you loss nor shame, his surrender will be to none other than the governor."

Hani could take it no longer, "By God, it is a shame for me if I surrender my refugee, my guest, and the

representative of the son of the Holy Prophet(S) to his enemies, while my hands have power and while I have companions! Even if I was alone, without a helper, I would not hand him over until I have sacrificed my life for him."
Muslim b. Amr Bahli once again swore an oath of protection before him but Hani ignored it.
Ibn Ziyad heard these words and exclaimed to bring Hani over to him.
Hani was brought forward.
Ibn Ziyad, irritated, raised his voice, "By God, I said bring him to me! Or I will decapitate you!"
Hani bravely replied, "Then the reflections of swords will shine around your palace!"
Ibn Ziyad screamed, "Woe upon you! You threaten me with swords?! Bring him close to me!"
With his whip, Ibn Ziyad struck Hani on the head, face, nose, and cheeks until his nose was broken, and blood dripped from his face. Blood poured down on his clothes and the whip was cracked.
Hani reached out for the guard's sword so that he could counterattack but the guard caught him in advance. Ibn Ziyad shouted, "Hold him!" They tied him up and dragged him to one of the rooms of the palace where he was held captive. Ibn Ziyad also ordered that he be watched.

Either Asma b. Kharja or Hassan b. Asma, stood up and exclaimed, "This has been an awful day! O emir, you asked us to bring this man to you. Now, you have disfigured his face, coloured his beard with blood, and then proceeded in trying to kill him."

Ibn Ziyad got infuriated and said, "You are also from him!"
On the orders of Ibn Ziyad, he was captured, abused, and imprisoned in the palace.
He called out to Hani, "*Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'oon.* O Hani, I am sorry for your loss!"

Amr b. Hajjaj was the father-in-law of Hani, and his daughter Raviha was the wife of Hani. When he heard that Hani had been killed, he went to the palace with the entire Mizhaj tribe. He called out, "I am Amr b. Hajjaj and all of these are the warriors of Mizhaj, and prominent personalities. We have not broken the obedience and we do not wish for any division in our society. We have been informed of the news that our leader Hani has been killed." Ibn Ziyad realised the reason behind their assembly. He asked judge Shureih to tell them that Hani was well. Shureih, who was a liar, told everyone that Hani was unharmed and with that, the simple-minded members of the crowd returned home contented.

An abandoned soldier

Hani's own tribe were tricked by Ibn Ziyad and they abandoned him. But Muslim b. Aqil was raised by Imam Ali(A) himself. When Muslim found out what had happened to Hani, he pulled his sword, gathered his followers and mobilised them for a battle against Ibn Ziyad. They surrounded the palace and Ibn Ziyad was under siege. The battle between the armies of Ibn Ziyad and Muslim had begun.

Ibn Ziyad's subjects, those inside the palace alongside their emir, started a propaganda campaign, warning the followers of Muslim of war and tried to scare them off with the army in Syria. This continued until nightfall. Seeds of doubt were planted amongst Muslim's followers due to this campaign. They started to whisper among themselves. "What will we do now when this sudden uprising has pressured us? It is better that we stay at home and leave these two groups until God improves their condition."
No one except ten men stood alongside Muslim. Muslim then left for the mosque to perform the evening prayer. When Muslim had finished the prayer, and turned around, he saw that even those ten men had abandoned him. Nonetheless, a soldier raised by Imam Ali(A) does not need anyone but God beside him.

As darkness covered the sky, Muslim wandered alone through the streets and alleys of Kufa. Perhaps the loneliness reminded him of how his uncle Ali(A) used to walk these roads, watching over the poor, or performing quiet whispering prayers to God. Muslim ended up by a house in where a woman named Taw'a was living. He asked for water and he received it. She also offered protection and he accepted the offer, and stepped in. But Taw'a's son was a greedy person who had heard of Ibn Ziyad's reward for the one who finds Muslim. When he found out that Muslim was in their house, he informed Ibn Ziyad without hesitation. Ibn Ziyad called upon Mohammad b. Ashath and sent him with some soldiers to arrest Muslim. As soon as Muslim heard the sound of

hooves, he put on his armour, climbed a horse, and headed out to face the them.

When Muslim stepped out to the battlefield, the hearts of the enemies trembled with fear. He gripped the sword in such a manner that it reminded everyone present there of the way Zulfikar swung in the hands of Imam Ali(A)! Mohammad b. Ashath said, "O Muslim! We offer you amnesty!"
"Amnesty offered by you, liars and sinners, has no value."
He then continued his fight while reciting the lyrical poem of Humran b. Malik Khasami:

I swore not to be killed except as a free man,
even if death is repelling
Every man will one day face evil,
And what is cold will be mingled with what is hot.
The soul's ray returned, so it did set,
I fear only being charged with lying or being tempted.

The soldiers tried to stop the sweep of Muslim and cried out, "We are not trying to fool you!" but Muslim did not bother. He attacked different flanks of the enemy in waves, and when they could not confront his resistance, he continued to advance until he reached the heart of the enemy until all them attacked him at once. But no matter how brave and strong his soul was, he reached a point where he was limited by his physical strengths. Muslim became weaker and weaker due to the number of wounds on his body. A man finally struck him with his spear, causing him to fall and hence he was captured.

They took Muslim to Ibn Ziyad. He was put in a dungeon, waiting to be received by Ibn Ziyad. Muslim had not had water since the previous night, before the battle had started. In the dungeon, a servant tried to smuggle in a container filled with water and a glass for Muslim, but every time he tried to drink, blood dripped in the glass, making it impure. The third time he mumbled to himself, "All praise belongs to God! If it had been part of my provision, I truly would have been able to drink from it!"

It was as if God wanted to elevate his martyrdom, have him die thirsty and exhausted like his master, Imam Hossein(A). When Ibn Ziyad received them, Muslim did not greet him. The guard struck him and said, "Greet the commander!"

Muslim exclaimed, "Be quiet! Woe upon you! He is not my commander!"

Ibn Ziyad insidiously said, "Greet or do not greet, you will be killed regardless."

"It is no miracle for you to kill me as there has been worse people than you who have killed better people than me! Even if you chop up my body in the most hideous of ways, it will only expose your inner filth and evil, as crimes like these are part of your being!"

Ibn Ziyad tried again, "You agitator, by leaving the commander you have weakened the Muslims and created problems!"

But Muslim exclaimed, "Ibn Ziyad, you are lying! It was Mu'awiyah and his son Yazid who weakened the Muslims! Regarding the problems, it is you and your father Ziyad, who are the real filth, filled with hypocrisy

and evil. May God bestow me with martyrdom at the hands of the most corrupt person!"
Ibn Ziyad answers, "You wish for something God took from you and gave to someone who deserves it."
Muslim asked, "O son of Marjanah! Who deserves it?"
"Yazid b. Mu'awiyah."
Muslim replied, "Praise be to God! I am content with God's verdict between you and us!"
Ibn Ziyad then said, "You think you have a claim of the caliphate?"
With strength Muslim said, "I am certain, without a doubt!"
"Then tell me, why did you come to this peaceful city, created mischief and caused disorder between its people?"
"I did not come to create any of that. It is you who have uplifted evil, buried [anything] virtuous, and forced your authority on people without their approval. You led people away from the commands of God. You govern them like dictators. We have come to acknowledge that which is good and condemn evil, and to call all to follow the Book of God. This is our responsibility!"
At his point, where all of Ibn Ziyad's sneaky arguments were torn up by Muslim's striking rhetoric, Ibn Ziyad reached his boiling point. He screamed like a mad man, exposing his inner filth, and started to curse Muslim, Imam Ali(A), Imam Hassan(A) and Imam Hossein(A).
Muslim calmly said, "It is you and your father who are the worst of men. O enemy of God, do as you please!"
Ibn Ziyad ordered Bukair b. Umran and some of the other attendees to take Muslim and Hani to the top of the palace and kill them.

Muslim was in constant supplication and brought tranquillity to his heart by sending salutations upon the Holy Prophet(S) and his household(A).
The executioners turned towards Hani and said, "Lift your head."
Hani refused and said, "I am not generous with giving away my life and I will not assist you in killing me!"
The slave of Ibn Ziyad, Rashid, hit Hani by the neck, decapitated him, and threw his body off the palace.
When it was Muslims turn, he asked for the opportunity to pray two rak'at: after the prayer, he stood up, faced the horizon towards Mecca, placed his hand on his chest, and with a sigh said, "Asalamo Alayka ya Aba Abdullah!" Thereafter, he was also decapitated and thrown off the roof.
Ibn Ziyad sent Muslim's head to Yazid while the bodies of Muslim and Hani were hanged in Kufa as a reminder to their followers to not revolt against the caliph.

On the same day of Muslim's uprise in Kufa, Imam Hossein(A) rose in Mecca. The same day the pilgrims in Mecca, dressed in their white *ihram*-cloths, were moving towards the mountain of divine awareness, the essence of Imam Hossein's(A) clothes of pilgrimage turned to a *kaffan* of martyrdom. While the pilgrims were seeking forgiveness and *marifah* in Arafah, Imam Hossein(A), who was the source of all divine knowledge, left Mecca. While the caravan of reason sought the meaning of life on a mountain, the caravan of love sought the meaning of martyrdom on the path to Iraq. The spies of the caliphate hid their daggers under their *ihram* so that they could spill the blood of Imam Hossein(A) on the sand of

Arafah, but the blood of Imam Hossein(A) was meant for a different sand, and that is why he left, dressed in his *ihram*, and baffled every reasonable man with his *ishq*.

CHAPTER 2: KARBALA

Reason stays, love leaves

Three days prior to Imam Hossein(A) leaving Mecca, Abu Mohammad Waqidi and Zurarah b. Khalaj arrived, and informed the Imam(A) of the situation with the people of Kufa, that their hearts were with him but their swords against him. Imam Hossein(A) looked at them and then pointed towards the skies with his blessed hand. With this gesture, Imam Hossein(A) made a *mokashefa*, pulling away the veil of *malakut,* the spiritual dimension, and these two people got to witness how the gates of heaven opened, and waves upon waves of thousands of angels descended. The Imam(A) said, "If it was not for this world's order of cause-and-effect, and the arrival of [my] set time (death), I would fight them with these forces. However, I am convinced that martyrdom is assigned to me and my followers. No one, except my son Ali, will be saved."

Prophet Moses(A) defeated all of his enemies with a single miracle – the ocean rose, and swallowed Pharaoh and his entire army. Imam Hossein(A) showed specific individuals surrounding him that these divine forces were with him; yet he chose the natural way leading to his martyrdom Now, why would he do that? Why would he not just let the angels kill Yazid and his followers, and seize power instead, where all would have a happy ending.

Abdullah b. Zubayr used to visit Imam Hossein(A) every day, or every other day, while the Imam(A) was in Mecca. Ibn Zubayr knew that the people of Hijaz, the Arabian Peninsula, admired Imam Hossein(A), and therefore would never accept him as the caliph, as long as Imam Hossein(A) was in the vicinity. One day he said to Imam Hossein(A), "I do not know why we have not dissociated ourselves from Bani Umayyads, and why we refrain from rising against them while we are the sons of *mohajerin* (Emigrants – Muslims of Mecca), and more worthy of the caliphate than them. Tell me, what will you do?"
Imam Hossein(A) replied, "By God, I am thinking of going to Kufa, as my followers and the noblemen of the city has asked me to, and I pray to God for that which is best."
Ibn Zubayr said, "If I had followers like yours in Kufa, I would have gone there!"
In order for the Imam(A) to not discover his hidden agenda, he quickly added, "But if you stay in Hijaz and seek your goals, God willing, you will not be met by any resistance!" Ibn Zubayr then got up and left.
Imam Hossein(A) then said, "There is nothing more loveable in this world to this man than my departure from Hijaz to Iraq. He knows that he will not reach the caliphate as long as I am here and that people do not acknowledge him as my equal. He longs for my departure so that this city becomes his own."

During the same night as Imam Hossein(A) decided to leave Mecca, his brother Mohammad b. Hanafiya came and said, "O my brother! The disloyalty of Kufa towards

your father and your brother is known to you. I am afraid that they will repeat what they have done to you as well. However, if you stay in the holy city of Mecca, your honour, your glory and your magnanimity will be intact!
The Imam(A) replied, "My brother! I am afraid that Yazid b. Mu'awiyah will assassinate me in this holy sanctuary and thereby violate its sanctity."
Ibn Hanafiya said, "In that case you can travel to Yemen or to the desert and since your dignity is above all others' no one will touch you."
The Imam(A) replied, "I will think about it."
Next morning, Imam Hossein(A) was ready to depart. Mohammad b. Hanafiya heard the news and rushed to the Imam(A). He took hold of the Imams(A) camel and exclaimed, "Did you not promise to consider my proposal?!"
The Imam(A) replied, "Yes, I did." and the Imam(A) was met by another question, "But why are you leaving so urgently?!"
"When you left, the Prophet(A) revealed himself to me and said, 'O Hossein! Leave this place. Certainly, God wishes to see you killed'."
Mohammad b. Hanafiya cried out: "Verily to God we belong and verily to Him is our return! If that is the case, then why take the women and children?!"
The Imam(A) replied, "The Holy Prophet(S) said 'That God wishes to see them as captives.'"
Mohammad b. Hanafiyah was not the only one in those terms. Abdullah b. Abbas came twice to Imam Hossein(A) and in his devastation tried to stop him from leaving. Ibn Abbas also shared his doubts regarding the honesty of the Kufans, and suggested that Yemen would

be a better option in setting up a camp and bring followers, instead of going to them.
Imam Hossein(A) replied him saying that he had decided to carry out this journey. Ibn Abbas wondered why to include the women and the children as well. At that point Imam Hossein's(A) sister, Lady Zaynab, called out, "We are going by our own free will!"

Lady Zaynab's husband, another Abdullah, named Abdullah b. Ja'far Tayyar, who also was her cousin, wrote an urgent letter to the Imam(A), asking the reason of his travel in that direction he was taking, as the result of this travel will lead to the end of him and his family, and that the light of guidance on earth will be extinguished. Abdullah pleaded to the Imam(A) to not leave Mecca until his arrival. The letter was delivered by Abdullah's two sons, Awn and Mohammad. Abdullah b. Ja'far also spoke with Amr b. Said, a stateman in Mecca, and received a sealed document which guaranteed the safety of the Imam(A). Abdullah delivered the document of safety together with Yahya b. Said. Imam Hossein(A) replied, "The one who invites people to God, the Majestic, and does good and says: 'I am a Muslim', has not opposed God and His messenger. Truly you have invited me to safety and kindness but the best safety (*aman*) is in the safety of God. On the day of Judgement, He will not grant His protection to the one who did not rely on Him. That is why we ask God to grant us awareness of Him in this world so that we may reach His protection on the Day of Judgement. If you, with your letter, wish to show good and kindness towards me then may God reward you in this world and in the next. That

is all." No matter how much Abdullah b. Ja'far and Yahya b. Said tried to convince Imam Hossein(A) they did not succeed. Amongst other things that Imam Hossein(A) said was, "I have seen the Prophet(S) in a dream and I have been ordered to complete a mission that I am on my way to complete, regardless if it is advantageous or not."
They humbly asked what the dream was.
But the Imam(A) only replied, "I have not revealed it to anyone and I will not do so until I meet my Lord!"

According to Arabic tradition every father is known by his *konya* i.e., a title with "Abu" (father of) followed with the name of his eldest son. Imam Hossein's(A) *konya* was Aba Abdullah, even though he did not have a son named Abdullah. Then, what is the secret with this title? According to the literal translation it means, "The father of all of Gods servants". *Ubudiyyah* (servitude), *abd* (servant) and *mawla* (master) are realities and expressions of love, lover, and beloved. The best of servants is he who with complete dedication fulfill all the wishes of his master. He does not only sacrifice his own will before his master's, but is as well content and satisfied with his decision. In reality, the servant disappears and becomes an extension of the master. Is this interaction and unification not just pure love?! A lover, in his infatuation, passionately wants to perform all the wishes of the beloved until the beloved falls in love with the lover and the affection reaches its climax where the boundary between the lover and the beloved disappears. The lover is annihilated in the beloved. A true servant is therefore a true lover. And the title of

Imam Hossein(A) is the father and/or master of all servants!
Imam Hossein's(A) conversations with the three Abdullahs; Ibn Zubayr, Ibn Abbas, and Ibn Ja'far, definitely show why he is called Aba Abdullah! Imam Hossein(A) highlights, in three different conversations, three aspects of man's will and reality. Man, the creation, wants him [Imam Hossein(A)] to come. God, the Creator, wishes but does not impose on him and his family to go, even though the inevitable outcome is their martyrdom and captivity. And he and his family, the individual, wants and chooses by their own free will to walk this path, which in the long run will lead to the salvation of man, and the restoration of God's message, even though if in short run may result in physical torment and death.

The journey begins

Imam Hossein(A) cancelled his pilgrimage and left Mecca on the day of Arafah, on the 9th of Thul-Hijjah in the year 60 A.H. He continued his journey until he, at approximately midday, reached Thalabiya. The Imam(A) sat down and took a short nap. When he awoke, he said, "I dreamt of a hidden voice telling me, 'You are on your way and death will bring you to Paradise!'"
His son Ali asked, "O dear father! Are we not on the right path?"
The Imam(A) replied, "Why would we not be, my son? By the One whom everyone must return to, we are!"
Ali then replied, "Then we have nothing to fear by death!"

Imam Hossein(A) prayed for his son, "May God bestow upon you the greatest reward, of which He bestows to every father's child."

The conversation once again conveys that following the right path and completing one's duty, was the only thing of importance to Imam Hossein(A), his family, and his followers. Death, which awaits every man, is nothing to fear as long as one faces it whilst on the right path.

They spent the night there, to then meet Abu Hirra Azdi in the morning. Abu Hirra approached the Imam(A) and with greetings asked him, "O son of God's messenger! What have you brought from God's sanctuary and the sanctuary of your grandfather?"
Imam Hossein(A) said, "O Abu Hirra, when the Umayyads confiscated what was mine, I was patient. When they demanded my blood, I left. By God, these traitors and rebels will truly kill me and God will truly make them wear shameful clothes, and make sure that the sword shall rule them."

A reluctant love

Zoheir b. Qayn was pilgriming in Mecca alongside with his tribe, the Bani Bajali. The return home to Kufa, their route crossed the caravan of Imam Hossein(A). They were aware of the ongoing conflict with Yazid and decided to remain outside it. Zoheir had taken part in many of the wars and conquests during the first three caliphs' time, and with that had reached a high position where he was regarded as a soldier of the caliphate.

Later, when people were fed up with corruption and decided to storm the house of the third caliph, Uthman, causing a demonstration that led to Uthman's death, he blamed Imam Ali(A), and considered him guilty of spilling Uthman's blood. Therefore, he was determined to avoid Imam Hossein(A) at all costs. Wherever Imam Hossein(A) set his camp up, Zoheir's caravan would continue and set their camp further away from the Imam's. However, once Zoheir and his tribe had just sat down for lunch when a messenger from the Imam arrived, greeted Zoheir and told him that the Imam(A) has summoned him.

Everyone stopped eating and could not move.

Delam b. Amr, who was Zoheir's wife, broke her silence and said, "Praise be to God, how strange! The son of the Holy Prophet calls you and you do not respond?! What could happen if you were to go and listen to the Imam?!"

Zoheir was too ashamed to speak and left the tent with a sadness shadowing his face. Zoheir had a private conversation with Imam Hossein(A). And what a conversation! Zoheir was a changed man after that interaction! What did Imam Hossein(A) say to Zoheir altering his heart instantly?! Zoheir had left his own tent and his wife, saddened, but now retuned into the tent with a face immersed in love, exclaiming, "Hurry up and take down my tent for I shall unite with Hossein and his camp!"

Everyone was shocked witnessing his transformation, they did not know how to react. Zoheir told them, "I participated in the conquest of Balanjar and God gave us victory, and we were given bounty. Salman Farsi asked,

'Are you happy over the triumph and bounty which God has given you?'
'Yes!' I replied. Salman then said, 'If you meet young men from the family of Mohammad, then be happier to fight with them than you are with the bounty you were given today!' so now I leave you all in God's custody!"
He then turned to his wife and said, "My loving wife, I divorce you, as I do not want to cause you anything but good. I have decided to continue in the service of my Imam, may my body and soul be sacrificed for him." He gave her his properties and sent her to her family with one of her cousins.
Delam bid farewell to her husband and said, "May God reward you! I demand that you remember me when you see Hossein's grandfather in the afterlife!"
Finally, Zoheir said to his followers, "Whosoever wishes to join me is welcomed, otherwise this shall be our last encounter!"

Bloodshed separates the way

Abdullah b. Yuqtur's mother was a nurse to Imam Hossein(A) during his childhood. That is why Abdullah b. Yuqtur was known as the Imam's(A) foster brother. When Imam Hossein(A) had not received any messages from Muslim b. Aqil, he sent Abdullah b. Yuqtur to Kufa. Unfortunately, Abdullah was captured by soldiers and was taken to Ibn Ziyad. Ibn Ziyad ordered him to go to the rooftop of the palace and curse Imam Hossein(A) as a liar and son of a liar and that afterwards his fate would be decided.

Abdullah b. Yuqtur was taken to the roof. People gathered on the ground and looked at him as he was observing them. He filled his lungs with air and roared, "O people! I am the messenger of Hossein, son of Fatima, daughter of the Prophet! He calls you to help him against that bastard, son of Marjanah!"
When Ibn Ziyad heard this, he was infuriated and screamed that Abdullah should be thrown off the roof. Consequently, they threw him and Abdullah hit the ground and broke all his bones, but did not die. He remained there breathing. Surely his final thoughts must have been with Imam Hossein(A), this is before Abd al-Malik b. Umair al-Lakhami threw himself over Abdullah and stabbed him to death.

Abdullah b. Salim al-Asadi and Mudhri b. Mushma'il al-Asadi had finished their pilgrimage when they rode in full speed to reach Imam Hossein(A) and to witness the development of the battle. On their way the ran into a man from Bani Asad. He told them that he had just left Kufa in a state where Muslim b. Aqil and Hani b. Urwa had been killed.
"I saw them dragged through the city by their feet," he said.
Both of the tribal brothers rode on until they reached Imam Hossein(A). They approached the Imam(A) and with greetings said, "May God's mercy be upon you! We come with news. If you wish, we can say it openly before everyone, otherwise me may take it in private."
Imam Hossein(A) looked at his followers and said, "Nothing shall be hidden from them."

They said, "One of our tribal members, who has a good reputation, is credible and sensible, has told us that he had left Kufa in a state where Muslim b. Aqil and Hani b. Urwa had been killed, and he had seen them getting dragged through the market by their feet!"
When Imam Hossein(A) heard this, he kept repeating, *"Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'oon!* (Surely, to God we belong and to Him is our return). May God's mercy be upon them both!"
Then they added "We ask you, by God, to think about your life and that of your family, and to return as you have no helpers in Kufa. We fear that the city has turned against you!"
When Muslim b. Aqil's brothers, who were as well present in the caravan of Imam Hossein(A), heard this, they got up and exclaimed, "Never! By God, we will not leave until we have gotten our revenge or tasted what our brothers have tasted!"
Imam Hossein(A) looked at them and said, "Nothing remains in this life for these men."
Everyone understood that Imam Hossein(A) was determined to continue the journey. Imam Hossein(A) gathered Muslim's family, hugged the children and had them informed of their father's martyrdom. He then waited until dawn, asked everyone to fill their water bottles up and then continued.

When the Imam(A) reached Zubalah, he received the news of Abdullah b. Yuqtur's martyrdom. Imam Hossein(A) gathered his caravan and made an announcement, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. The heart-breaking news of Muslim b. Aqil's,

Hani b. Urwa's and Abdullah b. Yaqtur's martyrdoms have reached us! Our followers have abandoned us! So those of you who wish to leave, please do so! We lift all the demands from you!"
People started to scatter left and right. Those who remained were the followers who had accompanied Imam Hossein(A) all the way from Medina. Imam Hossein(A) knew that many of the Bedouins that joined his caravan, believed they were going to a city where the Imam(A) would be obeyed and he would receive a position of power. The Imam(A) disliked that people had followed him without knowing what they were encountering. With that announcement he made it crystal clear for everyone that Kufa had abandoned him and that no worldly gains or benefits were waiting. And that is why many turned away from him. The spilled blood of the martyrs and the words of Imam Hossein(A) was a form of filtration, separating gold from stones, devotees from crawlers, righteous from false. Only the ones remaining were truly determined to die for the Imam(A).

A courageous messenger

On the journey, Imam Hossein(A) encountered the poet, Farazdaq, who greeted him, and asked, "O son of the Prophet! How can you trust the people of Kufa after that they have killed your cousin?"
Tears flowed down Imam Hossein's(A) cheeks as he said, "May God's mercy be upon Muslim! He shaped his path towards God's content and paradise. He fulfilled his duty while our responsibility continues." Afterwards, Imam Hossein(A) recited the following verses:

"If the world is considered to be
precious,
Then God's rewards are more
valuable and precious
And if bodies are created for death
Then martyrdom in the way of God is
higher and better
And if provision is already
predetermined
How beautiful it is to be less greedy
while striving for it
And if valuable possessions must be
left behind
Why is it that man is avaricious to
spend off his wealth
which will [anyways] be left behind?"

Imam Hossein(A) wrote a letter to the leading Shias in Kufa, amongst them were Sulayman b. Surad, Musayyab b. Najba, and Rafaah b. Shaddad. Qais b. Mosahar Saidawi, who was responsible to deliver the letter. He was a young and a noble man from Kufa, member of the Bani Asad tribe. He was the messenger of the people of Kufa, sent to Imam Hossein(A), and who had accompanied Muslim back to Kufa. He received the signatures by the Kufans, who had signed their oath of allegiance to Imam Hossein(A) and inviting him to Kufa, all in the presence of Muslim. Qais left Muslim before they [Kufans] had turned their back, taking with him their signatures and letters to Imam Hossein(A). Now he

was given the mission to return back to Kufa with the Imam's(A) letter, aware of the deadly situation, and that Muslim had been deserted. When Qais approached Kufa, he was stopped by Ibn Ziyad's representative, Haseen b. Namir, who started interrogating Qais. Qais chose to destroy the letter and Haseen sent him to Ibn Ziyad, who interrogated him as well. He asked, "Who are you?" whereupon Qais replied, "I am one of Amir al-mo'menin's, and his sons', friend."
Ibn Ziyad asked, "Why did you destroy the letter?"
Qais answered, "So that you would not know the content of it."
Ibn Ziyad, visibly annoyed, asked, "Who wrote it and to whom was it?"
Qais said, "The letter was by Imam Hossein(A) addressed to some Kufa residents whom I do not know the names of."
Ibn Ziyad got angry, screaming, "By God, I will not let you go unless you give me their names or stand on this pulpit, and curse Hossein, his father, and brother. If you refuse, I will slaughter you into pieces!"
Qais replied calmly, "I will never reveal their names. However, I do not mind cursing."
Qais mounted the pulpit and started praising God, then paid tribute to the Holy Prophet(S), to then continue invoking God's mercy on Imam Ali(A), his sons(A), and cursed Ibn Ziyad, his father, and the stubborn Umayyads.
Thereafter, he called, "O people! I am the messenger of Hossein to you, accept him, and answer his call and invitation!"

Ibn Ziyad lost his composure and commanded for Qais to be thrown from the top of the palace. Qais's body, alike that of Muslim's, Hani's, and Abdullah's, fell from the top of the palace while his soul flew high above with the wings of martyrdom. When news of Qais's martyrdom reached Imam Hossein(A), he cried, saying, "O Lord! Provide holy and honourable abodes for our companions and us. Embrace us in Your mercy, as You are Mighty over all things!"

Holy land

When Imam Hossein's(A) caravan were two stops away from Kufa, one of his followers called out, "*Allahu Akbar!*" Imam Hossein(A) asked what the matter was. They observed silhouettes of horses closing in on distant horizon. Imam Hossein(A) ordered for their caravan to move towards Dhu Husam's cliffs, so that they would face the riders head on without risking an ambush from behind. They got there in time and set up camp. Later on, they could see horses and banners approaching them. This occurred midday, while the sun was scorching hot, and Imam Hossein(A), alongside his companions, were clothed in turbans and swords, as Hurr b. Yazid al-Riyahi arrived accompanied by 1000 riders. As Imam Hossein(A) saw their state, he told the young men of his caravan, "Give water to those men and quench their thirst, give some to their horses as well!" The young men did as they were told; the riders drank until their thirst was quenched. After that, they filled their water bottles and cups, went to their horses, and let each drink at least three, four and even five sips of water.

When time for midday prayer came, Imam Hossein(A) asked Hajjaj b. Masruq al-Ju'fi to recite *azan*.
Thereafter, Imam Hossein(A) came forward, wearing a cloak. He praised God and said, "O people! This is my excuse before God and you: I did not come to you until your letters came to me, and your messenger said, 'Come to us, we do not have an Imam! Perhaps God will unite us towards guidance under your [leadership]!' If you still hold the same position, I have come to you. If you promise me your support, I will come to your city. However, if you do not wish for that, then I will leave you and return to where I came from."
No one said a thing. They asked Hajjaj b. Masruq to continue with *iqamah*. After iqamah, the Imam(A) turned towards Hurr and asked him, "Do you wish to lead your followers in prayer?"
Whereupon Hurr replied, "No, you can pray and we will follow you in prayer."
Hence, Imam Hossein(A) led the prayers. Thenceforth, he went to his tent, followed by his companions. In the same manner, Hurr followed, accompanied by some of his own companions while the rest of the soldiers returned to their horses, clenching their reins and shading themselves from the sun.
When time for the afternoon prayer had come, and *azan* was recited, followed by *iqamah*, Imam Hossein(A) once again led prayer. Then he turned towards everyone present, praised God and said, "O people! Surely, if God is your main point, it is more loved by God for you to acknowledge the rights of those who have rights. We, the Ahl al-Bait(A), are more legitimate to the guardianship (wilayah) in the caliphate over you than

those who demand that which does not belong to them, and who rule you with injustice and oppression! However, if you dislike us and do not know our right, and your opinion differ from that which you have expressed in your letters that were delivered by your messenger, I will leave you!"
Hurr exclaimed, "By God, I do not know about these letters of which you speak!"
Imam Hossein(A) said to Uqbah b. Sim'an, "Bring these two saddlebags containing their letters to me." The bags, full of letters, were brought forth and spread before Hurr's army. Hurr said, "But we are not among those who have written to you! We have been commanded to not let you go, but bring you before Ubaydullah b. Ziyad!"
Imam Hossein(A) said, radiating with strength, "Death is closer to you than something like that!" then he ordered his companions to mount their horses. Accordingly, all of Imam Hossein's(A) caravan, men and women, rose and prepared for departure. When the caravan started to move, the soldiers stopped them. Imam Hossein(A) said to Hurr, "May your mother grieve your death! What do you want?!"
Hurr said, "By God, if anyone among the Arabs had said this to me, even if he was in your circumstance, I would not have left him without mentioning that his mother should also grieve his death, whomsoever he might be. Except, by God, it is not possible for me to mention your mother without saying the best of things!"
Imam Hossein(A) then said, "What then do you want?"
Hurr said, "By God, I wish to take you with me to Ubaydullah b. Ziyad!"

Imam Hossein(A) told him, "By God, I will not go with you!"
Hurr said, "In that case I will, by God, not leave you!"
Their conversation lasted for a long while, that until Hurr eventually said, "I have not been ordered to battle against you. I have merely been instructed to not leave you until I have brought you to Kufa. If you refuse, then take another route that neither leads you to Kufa nor Medina, as a compromise between us."
Consequently, Imam Hossein(A) changed route, reaching Azib-ul-Hajanat instead. When Ibn Ziyad was informed of Hurr's and Imam Hossein's(A) conversation, he admonished Hurr for his soft attitude with the Imam(A). He was instead commanded to harass and disturb Imam Hossein(A). Hence, Hurr chose to block and prevent the caravan from continuing its new course. Imam Hossein(A) exclaimed, "Did you not just demand of me to change my route?!"
Hurr said, "That is correct, but in this letter the emir has ordered me to restrain your progression. Among my riders, there are spies who will assure that I am following orders."
At that point, Imam Hossein(A) stood up before his companions, praised God, invoked blessings upon his grandfather(S), and said, "You witness the situation we are faced with. The world has changed, it is revealing its ugly face, and withholding its goodness. Nothing remains of it except a drop from the bottom of a glass. Life seems despicable and baseless, like distasteful grasslands. Do you not see how truth has been forsaken and deceit practiced? How beautiful if a steadfast [believer] would long for meeting his God (through

martyrdom in His path)! That is how I see it, I see success and not death, and life with oppressors is nothing but damnation!"
Zoheir b. Qayn stood up and exclaimed, "May God keep us steadfast on the path of guidance, and in your service! We have heard your words. If we are to continue living in this world, we prefer following you into any situation!"
Hilal b. Nafe, one of Imam Ali's(A) companions and a reciter of the Quran, rose and cried out, "By God, we do not see our meeting with God as distasteful, and we are firm and steadfast in our intentions and understanding! We are friends to your friend and enemies to your enemy!"
Burayr b. Khudayr al-Hamedani stood up and proclaimed, "O son of the Holy Prophet! By God, He has favoured us by keeping us in your company, so that our bodies are torn apart and for your grandfather to be our intercessor in the afterlife!"
Thereafter, Imam Hossein(A) rode on with Hurr's army close behind, sometimes blocking them and sometimes not, until Imam Hossein(A) reached a wasteland. It was a Thursday, the 2nd of Muharram. A messenger arrived from Ibn Ziyad, greeting Hurr but not Imam Hossein(A). Hurr read the letter, commanding him to stop Imam Hossein(A) in an open land, without assuring water. The messenger was instructed to stay until Hurr had fulfilled the command, and then report back to Ibn Ziyad. Hence, Hurr's army blocked the way for Imam Hossein's(A) caravan. Zoheir b. Qayn told Imam Hossein(A), "O son of the Prophet! To battle these people now is easier than doing so with those who come after! By my life, there

will come a huge number of them afterwards whom we will not be able to face."
The Imam(A) replied, "I do not intend to declare a war against them."
Imam Hossein(A) then looked out at the landscape, and asked, "What is the name of this place?"
Someone said, "Nainawa", Imam Hossein(A) asked again, "Does it have another name?"
Whereupon another one answered, "Shatt al-Forat" again the Imam(A) asked, "No, something else?"
"*Karbala*," it was finally said.
Imam Hossein(A) then ordered, "Come down, this is the place for our camp and where our blood shall be shed. This is the land of our holy shrines. By God, this is the place where our women will be captivated. This is the place my grandfather informed me about."
All of them dismounted, including Hurr and his army. Imam Hossein(A) sat down, started to edge his sword, reciting verses whose meaning is something like,

"Every living [man] on a path goes,
The promised is close to the one who
leaves and goes,
And a meeting with the Majestic
repose."

When Lady Zaynab heard these verses, she said, "O my brother, a person convinced of his own death recites such verses!"
Imam Hossein(A) replied, "That is right, my dear sister."
Lady Zaynab exclaimed, "O what a grief! Hossein informs me of his own death!" Whereupon all women

started crying and hitting their faces. Umm Kulthum cried out, "O Mohammad! O Ali! O mother! O brother! O Hossein! O what a sorrow is awaiting us after you, O Aba Abdullah!"
Imam Hossein(A) comforted his sisters, saying, "My sisters, find comfort in God's promise, as all of heavens inhabitants will be annihilated, and all of earth's inhabitants will die, and everything will perish except God!"
Then he said to the women, "Umm Kulthum! Zaynab! Fatima! Robab! Listen! Do not tear your faces and do not utter inappropriate sentences after my martyrdom!"
When one sees this strong relationship between Imam Hossein(A) and the female members of his family, one understands the reasons behind them joining Imam Hossein(A) on his journey. Because if he had left them in Hijaz, or another city, it would come to Yazid's knowledge, and he would have them arrested and used them as a preventative mode against Imam Hossein(A) from pursuing his resistance. The women's presence in Imam Hossein's(A) struggle, gave strength and made it possible for the Imam(A) to work towards reaching his goal, whilst playing a vital role as first-hand witnesses and survivors, who could narrate and spread what really occurred in Karbala.

The sun addressing the shadows

Ibn Ziyad called upon his followers, who all agreed to fight Imam Hossein(A). Even though he did not hold them in high regards, they still obeyed him. He offered Omar b. Sa'd reign over Rey (Tehran) if he would

command the army. Omar b. Sa'd accepted the offer without hesitation, and left Kufa with 4000 soldiers tailing him with the sole purpose of killing Imam Hossein(A). Up to the night of the 6th Muharram, Ibn Ziyad kept on sending troops in support of Omar b. Sa'd, till the army was made up of 30,000 men. Omar b. Sa'd surrounded Imam Hossein(A) and put him in a difficult situation. He isolated the Imam(A), his family, and his companions, from water supply until they were suffering tremendous thirst.

Imam Hossein(A) stood up, leaning on his sword, and called before the army, "Answer me, by God! Do you know me?!"

They replied, "Yes! You are the son of the Prophet!"

Imam Hossein(A) said, "Answer me, by God! Are you aware that my grandfather is the messenger of God?"

They replied, "By God, yes!"

The Imam(A) continued, "Answer me, by God! Are you aware that my mother is Fatima, daughter of Mohammad?"

They replied, "By God, yes!"

He said, "Answer me, by God! Are you aware that my grandmother is Khadija, daughter of Khuwailid, the first Muslim woman of this nation?!"

They again replied, "Yes, by God!"

The Imam(A) continued, "Answer me, by God! Are you aware that Hamza, master of martyrs, is my father's uncle?"

They answered, "By God, yes!"

He said, "Answer me, by God! Are you aware that Ja'far, who is able to fly in paradise, is my uncle?"

Again, they said, "By God, yes!"

The Imam(A) said, "Answer me, by God! Does the sword, which I drew and [I am] holding in my hand, belong to the Holy Prophet(S)?"
They said, "By God, yes!"
Imam Hossein(A) said, "Answer me, by God! The turban on my head, does it belong to the Holy Prophet(S)?"
They replied with, "By God, yes!"
The Imam(A) continued, "Answer me, by God! Are you aware that Ali was the first to accept Islam, that his knowledge is deeper than that of everyone else's, that his patience and tolerance was higher than that of everyone else's, and that he is the leader of every Muslim, men and women?"
They said, "By God, yes!"
Finally, the Imam(A) asked, "How can you then belittle yourselves by shedding my blood, when my father shall be the master of the river of Kawthar on the last day, and will choose who shall be driven away from it like camels driven away from water, and he will be holding the flag of praise (*Liwaul Hamd*) on day of Judgement?"
They replied, "We know of all this, yet we still will not leave you be until you taste the pangs of death through your thirst!"
The women who heard this started weeping loudly, so he sent his brother Abbas and his son Ali, saying, "Make sure they are quiet. By my life, they will have much to mourn for later!"

Omar b. Sa'd received a letter from Ibn Ziyad, commanding him to start the battle, effective immediately, and warned him not to delay it any further.

Therefore, Omar and his army immediately initiated an attack on Imam Hossein(A) and his company.
Shimr b. Dhil Jawshan, who belonged to the same tribe as Umm al-Banin, Imam Ali's(A) wife, rushed ahead. He addressed Umm al-Banin's sons as "nephews" even though she was not his sister. Maybe Shimr did that on purpose to hurt Imam Hossein(A) even more. "Where are my nephews, Abdullah, Ja'far, Abbas, and Uthman?!" he called out.
Imam Hossein(A) requested Umm al-Banin's sons to answer him, even though he was a corrupt (*fasiq*) and an evil man.
Umm al-Banin's sons replied angrily, "What do you want?"
Shimr said, "O my nephews! You are under my amnesty. Do not be killed with your brother Hossein, instead follow the master of believers, Yazid b. Mu'awiyah!"
There, Abbas could not take it any longer. Maybe his anger was due to the arising question, what does Shimr think of me? Has he seen a hole in me that could be receptive to his words?! Hossein, who is my first and last, my everything; how dare he even suggest such an abominable offer?!
Abbas rushed ahead and shouted, his breast filled with heroism and fire, "May your hands be cut off! May your offer for amnesty be cursed, O enemy of God! Are you asking us to leave our brother and master, Hossein b. Fatima, to obey those cursed and sons of accursed?!"
Shimr returned to his army, infuriated, and humiliated.
As Imam Hossein(A) noticed that Abbas's words did not move the enemy, and that they were eager to battle at any cost, he told his brother Abbas, "It would be good if

you could delay the battle. On this night, we can worship God, as only He knows my special delight in prayers and reciting His Holy book."
When Abbas requested this suggestion to Omar b. Sa'd, he did not reply, to which Amr b. Hajjaj Zubedi reacted and replied to Omar, "By God, if a low- class poor man had this wish, you would have accepted it, then how come the family of the Prophet's(S) household is denied?"
On hearing that, Omar accepted the suggestion.
As Imam Hossein(A) sat down, he shortly drifted off to sleep. Then he woke up, and told Lady Zaynab, "O sister! I saw our grandfather Mohammad, our father Ali, our mother Fatima, and our brother Hassan in a dream. They told me, "O Hossein! You will be united with us soon!"
As Lady Zaynab heard this, her emotions turned vivid. How could they kill the Imam of their time?! She hit herself on the face and cried. Imam Hossein(A) comforted her, and said, "Be still and cry quietly, so the enemy do not hear your cry and be rejoiceful."

Night of love

The night of Ashura is truly the night of love. It was on this night that the enemies slept whilst the caravan of Imam Hossein (A) reached its peak of human perfection. Imam Hossein(A) gathered his followers in his tent. After praising God, he turned to them and said, "Surely, I do not know of followers better than you, or a family more virtuous than my family! May God bestow upon you the best of rewards! Now as the darkness of night

has covered you, seize this moment to leave! Every person can take one of my family members' hands and disperse into the darkness of night, as they do not want anyone except me!"
By saying this, Imam Hossein(A) released them off their oath of allegiance (*bay'ah*) they had sworn to him. When an Imam does this in this manner, it indicates that if his followers and family members were to leave, it does not count as breaking their Imam's word. This also shows that the women and children were never forced to follow Imam Hossein(A) on this journey, rather did so out of free will. One thing remains certain. The words of Imam Hossein(A) left the tent in turmoil. The present hearts were turned upside down. How could Imam Hossein(A) suggest we can leave him?!
Abbas was the first to speak. Abbas is an example of the best kind of servant, the one who died and lives for his love. Abbas endures anything, except separation from his beloved master Imam Hossein(A). He cried out, "Why would we do that?! To live without you?! May God never let such a day come!" Thereafter, the brothers and sons of Imam Hossein(A) spoke followed by Imam Hassan's(A) and Lady Zaynab's sons. All echoed the same sentences in a unifying voice.
Imam Hossein(A) looked at the sons of Aqil, and said, "Muslim's martyrdom is more than enough for you! You may all leave! You have my permission!"
All of them exclaimed, simultaneously, "O son of the Holy Prophet(S)! What would be said about us and what will we say to people?! That we left our elder, leader, Sayyed, Imam, son of the Prophet's(S) daughter, without firing an arrow alongside him?! Nor fought with a spear

with our hands or swung our swords against the enemy?! No, by God! O son of the Holy Prophet(S), we will never leave you! Our lives protect yours until we die in your arms! What befalls you shall befall us! How miserable life would be without you!"
Thereafter, Muslim b. Awsajah stood up and said, "Should we leave you and return only to see the enemy surrounding you?! No, by God! May God never allow such a scene to occur until I have hit my arrow deep within the enemy's chest, so that only the handle remains in my hand! May I crush the enemy below my feet! Even if unarmed, I will fight them with brick and stone, as I refuse to be separated from you, unless I die next to you!"
Said b. Abdullah al-Hanfi followed, and said, "No, by God! O son of God's messenger! I will never leave you until God witnesses how I have obeyed the Prophet's(A) command to protect you! Even if I would be wounded in your path, be burned alive, my ashes to be spread with the wind, and this was to happen 70 times over and again, I would never leave you until I see death and embrace martyrdom before you! Why not? Because there is only one death, after that I reach eternity and an unlimited generosity by God!"
Next, Zoheir b. Qayn al-Balaji stood up and said, "By God! O son of God's Messenger! I wish I will be killed, then brought back to life, then killed again and this to happen over and again for thousands of times to keep you, your brothers and your family members alive!"
Many more companions expressed similar words, "May our lives be sacrificed for you! We will protect you with all our beings, and if we attain martyrdom in your path,

we will have fulfilled our promises, and delivered that which we have said!"
In the meantime, news reached Bashir b. Amr al-Hadhrami that his son, solider in the Islamic army, was captured close to the border of Rey by enemy forces. Bashir said, "I trust in God in my hardships and those of my son's. I do not want to see him captive while I am alive."
Imam Hossein(A) told Bashir, "May God show you mercy! These are a few expensive fabrics I have been gifted, you may take them, and I release you from your oath to me. Take these fabrics, leave for the border, give them as ransom and rescue your son! Bring him home!"
Bashir looked at Imam Hossein(A) and said such a powerful sentence, "May wild animals tear me apart and eat me alive if I am to be separated from you! Am I to request a horse from you and then leave you with only a few helpers?! Never!"

During the night of Ashura, Imam Hossein(A) and his companions were engaged in prayers, worship, and reciting the Holy Quran. The melody from the camps sounded like that of a beehive. Some prayed, some supplicated, some recited the holy book, and some edged their swords and prepared their armour. Some held watch and others had private conversations with each other. One of the conversations that took place was between Abd al-Rahman and Burayr b. Khudayr al-Hamedani. Burayr initiated some jokes with Abd al-Rahman, to make him laugh, but the latter exclaimed, "Burayr! Are you laughing?! It is not time for laughs and jokes!"

Burayr replied, "My people know me to, in my young and old age, disliking falseness and jokes. However, now I laugh because of this path we have chosen! By God! The distance between us and the heavenly fairies is no more than one-hour combat with our swords against these people!"

Another conversation was between Imam Hossein(A) and his young nephew, Qasem b. Hassan. Qasem asked, "Uncle, will I become a martyr tomorrow?"

The Imam replied by asking, "What do you think of death?"

Qasem answered this question by just one sentence that until this day scholars continue to explore the meaning of, due to its depth and magnitude. He answered, "I find death sweater than honey!"

The Imam(A) then said, "Yes, you will be martyred tomorrow."

Abbas chose to protect the tents during the night, even when it was a cease-fire. Zoheir approached him and told him of how Imam Ali(A), after the martyrdom of Fatima Zahra(A), searched for a woman from a warrior tribe, and found Fatima bt. Hizam. He married her with the intent to have brave sons. They had four sons, after which she received the title Umm al-Banin (mother of sons), and all of them were present in Karbala. Zoheir said, "O Abbas! Your father wanted you for a day like this! Be cautious so that you do not him fail with your duty!"

Abbas reacted strongly to his words, and said, "Zoheir! Do you wish to idolize me with such words?! I swear by God, I will not fail to successfully support my brother till

death. Tomorrow I will show you that in a way you have never seen before in your life!"
A unit from Omar b. Sa'd's army came by the camp at all times to survey any activity. Some of them fell in love with Imam Hossein(A) and stayed; a total of 32 soldiers left Omar's army and joined Imam Hossein's(A) camp.

At first sight, it may seem that Imam Hossein(A) suggested the battle to be delayed one day for him to spend one last night worshipping his beloved Lord. However, there were many hidden layers to it. One of them is to keep the doors open for 32 soldiers to board the arc of salvation. One time, Imam Hossein(A) was seen outside his tent, bowing and rising, multiple times. It was not prayers, but something else. When he was asked as to what he was doing, he replied, "I am picking up thorns from the ground. Tomorrow, after me, they will attack the tents and the children will run without shoes."
That was Imam Hossein(A). In all situations, times and places, he poured out with mercy. He acted like a true representative of God on earth, as he constantly tended to His creation in all possible ways.

CHAPTER 3: ASHURA

After sunrise and the night's long worship had reached its end, the enemy's army formed their positions. Imam Hossein(A) prepared his troop for defence. They consisted of 32 riders and 40 foot-soldiers. Zoheir b. Qayn was given command over the right wing, Habib b. Mazaher for the left wing, and Abbas was the flag-bearer, in the centre of the troop.

Battle begins

Omar b. Sa'd's soldiers mounted their horses, where Imam Hossein(A) at the same time sent Burayr to admonish them. However, his efforts to admonish them for starting a battle against the Imam(A) gave no effect. So, Imam Hossein(A) mounted his horse, and as he stood before the army, he asked for it to be quiet, and started praising God. He reminded them of His greatness and attributes, sent blessings upon Prophet Mohammad(S), angels, and messengers, to then give a strong sermon:
"O, you people, may you be destroyed! May you always remain in grief and despair! You sought justice from us during extreme distress and called upon us for help. We hurried to you. Those swords that you are now holding, should be used in our cause and not against us! This fire you have ignited to harm us, should devour our enemies

and your oppressors. You have now aligned with your enemy without receiving any justice or benefit! Beware! Woe upon you! You left us even before the battle begun, and before the storm of tyranny could be stopped. This is absurd and mad! Yet you still serve them like grasshoppers and gather around them like moths! Death is upon you, O slaves of this nation, O fanatic sectarians, who have abandoned the Book and distorted the Word! You are drowned in sin, O companions of Satan and destructors of the guiding light of the Prophet(S)! Have you imagined the enemy strong and therefore distanced yourselves from us?! By God! Indeed, your tricks and betrayal are old. You will be the worst grief for those who see, and worst example of tyrannies. Behold! Surely, that illegitimate, son of an illegitimate, have left me with two choices: either fight you or suffer [in oppression] and [I say], 'Never! Nay to oppression!' God does not wish dishonour upon us! In the same way, His messengers, the believers, the pure bodies, and souls, and the honourable personalities, who are the most valuable, choose martyrdom above slavery to evil people!

Now, I am indeed journeying towards God and martyrdom, alongside my family and companions!"

The one who started the battle in Karbala was Omar b. Sa'd. The mirage of Rey clouded his senses, so he rushed ahead and fired his first arrow on Imam Hossein's(A) army, and shouted, "Witness before my emir that I was the first to shoot!"

After that, arrows rained upon them. Imam Hossein(A) told his companions, "May God's mercy be upon you!

Prepare for death that has no escape, as these arrows are messages of war to you!"

First wave

Amr b. Hajjaj was the commander of Omar b. Sa'd's right flank and he attacked Imam Hossein's(A) corresponding flank. But just as their horses were to attack the companions, they [the companions], aimed their arrows to create a wall of arrows to scare off the horses. As such, the horses retreated and started galloping the other way. Imam Hossein's(A) companions then started shooting them with arrows, and killed several of them, and injured others.

Martyrdom of the companions

A free man

When the battle begun, God gave Imam Hossein(A) two alternatives: Either triumph over his enemies or meet his Lord. He chose the latter. Imam Hossein(A) called out, "Is there anyone to aid us for the sake of God? Is there anyone prepared to protect the Prophet's(S) family?"
Hurr b. Ziyad Riyahi then turned to Omar b. Sa'd, and said, "Do you want to fight this man?"
Omar b. Sa'd replied, "Yes, by God! I will fight him so severely that heads will fall and cut hands will fly!"
Hurr withdrew from everyone else. A thought had awoken a feeling within him, it grew until it dominated his heart. He started to shake and tremble. Muhajir b. Aws, observing Hurr, asked him, "By God, your

behaviour is most strange! If I were to be asked who the most courageous man in Kufa is, I would not have disregarded you. But in what state am I seeing you now?!"

Hurr replied, "I stand between the choice of paradise or hell. By God, I choose nothing but paradise, even if I am cut into pieces and then burned!"

He said this and then took off with his horse in full speed towards Imam Hossein(A). Crying, with his hands on his head, he said, "O God! I have turned to you, and I am regretful! Please, accept my regret as I have caused worry and pain on your friends and the Holy Prophet's(S) children!"

When Hurr reached Imam Hossein(A), he cried out, "May I be sacrificed for you! I am the same man who prevented you from returning to Medina and made it difficult for you. By God! I never imagined these people to treat you like this! By God, if I knew they would have forsaken you as they did, I would never have treated you as I did! But now I have come to you, regretful before my Lord for that which I have committed, and I intend to support you until I die before you! Do you accept this repentance?!"

Imam Hossein(A) answered, "Yes! God will accept your regret and forgive you! What is your name?"

He said, "I am Hurr b. Yazid."

The Imam(A) then said, "Surely, you are free (*hurr*) just like your mother named you! You are freed from God's wrath in this life and the next. Dismount!"

However, Hurr remained seated on his horse. He had come heartbroken, and Imam Hossein(A) healed him. Now, his heart had been ignited with fire and flames for

Imam Hossein(A). He wanted to fight, fulfill his duty. Maybe he took the children into consideration, as he was clothed in enemy armor and did not wish to upset them. Hurr said, "According to my humble opinion, I cannot serve you better on feet than as a rider, and my last drop from my horse would be through martyrdom. As I was the first to revolt against you, please, allow me to be the first martyr to be killed in your honour. Perhaps then I will be given the honour to shake hands with the Holy Prophet on Judgement Day."
Imam Hossein(S) accepted Hurr's suggestion.
Hurr took off towards the enemy's army, and spoke harshly:
"O people of Kufa! May miseries befall your mothers! You called on Hossein and now that he has come, you have forsaken him to the enemy?! You claimed to fight with your lives for him, yet you started to attack him, with the sole intention to kill him! You have aimed for his life and grabbed him with a stranglehold. You have surrounded him from every corner, stopped him from going anywhere else on God's wide earth, so that he and his family may be secure. He has become like a captive in your hands. You have prevented him, the women, children, and his companions from Euphrates's water, [the same] water that Jews, Christians, and fire-worshippers drink from, and Sawad's pigs and dogs roll in! All while they are overcome by thirst! You have treated the Holy Prophet's(S) family this terribly after him! May God not give you water to drink on the Day of Thirst, if you do not become regretful and end this, now!"
One of those effected by Hurr's speech was Yazid b.

Ziyad b. Muhasir, who joined the side of Imam Hossein(A).

Afterwards, soldiers started firing arrows at Hurr, and so he attacked. He fought bravely and killed many enemies. He attacked in waves and with an injured and bloodstained horse, he recited,

"With the neck of my horse and a
prideful
chest,
I flow towards them like a river, until I
am in
blood clothed, ever!"

Finally, Hurr dismounted his horse and was challenged by Yazid al-Tamimi, "O Hurr, are you ready to combat?!"
Hurr shouted, "Yes! Indeed, I am!"
The enemy witnessed the way in which Hurr played Yazid al-Tamimi, like a cat playing a mouse, throwing him here and there, until he finally ended him. Zoheir b. Qayn joined Hurr. They fought an epic fight, side by side. If one of them rushed to attack and was surrounded, the other would disperse the gathered mass. They displayed a spectacular art of war, until more enemy soldiers joined in and they were separated. Hurr was then attacked from all sides and then killed. His pure body was brought to Imam Hossein(A), who cleaned his face and cried, "You are truly Hurr, like your mother named you! You are free in this world and in the hereafter!" May God be pleased with Hurr!

Yazid b. Ziyad b. Muhasir

Yazid b. Muhasir was a skilled archer. Hurr's speech moved him, and also the way in which Imam Hossein(A) acted. He left Omar b. Sa'd's army to join Imam Hossein(A). He kneeled before the Imam(A) and afterwards fired many arrows on the enemy. For every arrow, Imam Hossein(A) prayed, "O God, aim his shot and make heaven his goal!"
Out of all arrows, only five hit the ground. The rest pressed into the enemy. He fought until he was martyred. May God be pleased with him!

Abdullah b. Umair al-Kulabi

Yasar, Ziyad b. Abu Sufyan's servant, and Salim, Ubaydullah b. Ziyad's servant, rushed ahead and cried out, "Who dares to face us?!"
Habib b. Mazaher and Burayr b. Khudayr al-Hamedani advanced but were stopped by Imam Hossein(A). Then Abdullah b. Umair al-Kulabi rose and said, "O Aba Abdullah! May God shower you with mercy, let me face them!"
Imam Hossein(A) looked at him; his length, strength, and broad shoulders. He said, "I believe you can face them, go if you wish!"
Abdullah b. Umair approached them, and the two servants shouted, "Who are you?!"
When Abdullah b. Umair presented himself, they revealed their vanity and haughtiness, saying, "We do now know you. Let Zoheir b. Qayn, Habib b. Mazahir or

Burayr b. Khudayr, face us!" It was as if they were seeking known personalities to kill and to then later on present to their master.
However, Abdullah b. Umair would not hold back. Both Ziyad b. Abu Sufyan and his son, Ubaydullah b. Ziyad, were born because of extramarital relationships, with unknown fathers, therefore named, Ziyad b. Abi (Ziyad, son of his father), and Ubaydullah b. Marjanah (Ubaydullah, son of Marjanah, his mother's name). Perhaps that is why Abdullah b. Umair wished to burn down their vanity, and shouted at the top of his lungs, fire in his voice, "O son of an adulteress! It seems that you do not want to fight someone facing you! But you should know that no one will fight you, except that he is better than you!"
Afterwards, Yasar and Abdullah b. Umair clashed – while Abdullah b. Umair had overpowered Yasar and was about to kill him, the other servant, Salim, came from behind. Imam Hossein's(A) companions called out to warn him, but he pretended not to hear them to let Salim close in. He killed Yasar and just as Salim was about to struck, Abdullah b. Umair turned towards him, answered his attack, and ended him. However, this maneuver cost him his left fingers. Abdullah b. Umair continued excelling in the battlefield and fought bravely. His wife, Umm Wahab, and his mother, were with him. He returned to them and asked, "O mother! Are you pleased with me?!"
His mother said, "No! Not until you become martyr before Hossein!"
Abdullah b. Umair returned to the battlefield and continued to fight courageously. His wife witnessed how

his injuries increased and could finally not take it anymore. She picked up a spear, rushed towards her husband, and called, "May my parents be sacrificed for you! Continue to fight for the pure ones, for the children of the Prophet(S)!"
Abdullah b. Umair caught sight of his wife and tried to walk her back so that she would return. However, she held fast onto his clothes and exclaimed, "I will not return until I am killed alongside you!"
Imam Hossein(A) called on her, saying, "May God bestow your family with great rewards! Please, return to the women! May God be pleased with you!"
Despite her strong emotions, her bond, and love for her husband, her heart was still devoted to the wilayah and authority of Imam Hossein(A). With this single sentence by Imam Hossein(A), she let go of her husband and returned to the tents. Abdullah b. Umair al-Kulabi returned to the battlefield and continued fighting. When his right arm was cut off, he picked up his sword with his left one and continued combating. When his left arm was also cut off, he fell and was killed. His wife ran out and embraced her husband's mangled body, wiping the blood off his face. Shimr sent his slave, Rustam, who hit her violently on the head with an iron club. She fell down and became Karbala's first female martyr, by her husband's side. May God be pleased with them both!

Burayr b. Khudayr al-Hamedani

Yazid b. Ma'qal advanced from the army of Omar b. Sa'd. He shouted, "Burayr b. Khudayr! Do you not see what God has done to you?!"

Burayr replied, "By God, He has done me good and punished you!"
Ibn Maq'al exclaimed, "You lie! You were not a liar in the past. Do you remember the day I walked with you in Banu Laudhan's region, and you said, 'Uthman b. Affan is truly wasteful, and Mu'awiyah b. Abu Sufyan is a misguided person who misguides others while Ali b. Abu Talib is the leader of truth and guidance'?"
Burayr replied, "I witness that to be my opinion and position!"
Ibn Ma'qal said, "I witness that you are amongst those who have gone astray!"
Burayr said, "Are you prepared to invoke a curse? Let us pray that God curses the liar, and that the one on the wrong side is to be killed. Come forth so that I may face you!"
Both advanced and raised their hands in prayer and asked God to send His curse upon the liar, and that the one on the rightful side is to kill the one on the wrongful. And then the fight begun. Ibn Ma'qal managed to reach Burayr with a light strike but was met by Burayr's violent sword blow, crushing through Ibn Ma'qal's helmet and stuck his head. He fell with the sword still stuck on his head. Burayr's attack frightened the enemy ranks, and still long after these scenes in Karbala, many of them remained traumatized by their memories.
Radhi b. Munqidh al-Abdi, another enemy soldier, jumped on Burayr and started wrestling him, made it almost look like a street fight. Burayr managed to eventually overpower him and sat on his chest. Radhi called for help, "Where are all warriors and defenders?!"

That is when another sly soldier by the name Ka'b b. Jabir a-Azdi, rushed ahead and pressed an arrow into Burayr's back. That did, however, not stop Burayr from continuing to battle Radhi. Ka'b hit again with his arrow, pushing it deeper down Burayr's back. He then drew his sword and started striking Burayr until he fell dead. May God be pleased with Burayr!

Wahab b. Wahab al-Kulabi, the Christian

On the journey to Karbala, Imam Hossein's(A) caravan passed through an older woman's house. Her name was Umm Wahab, who was a Christian. The Imam(A) asked her, "Do you have water?" whereupon she answered, "No, my son is on his way to bring us water. He went early morning, and the journey back and forth takes all day. He will be home by the evening, with enough water for a whole week."
The Imam(A) dug a hole in the ground with his sword and out of it, water flowed. She was shocked and exclaimed, "Are you Jesus Christ?!"
The Imam(A) replied, "No, I am his brother, Hossein b. Ali."
Thereafter, Imam Hossein's(A) caravan continued its course.
That evening, when her son Wahab al-Nasrani returned home with water, he saw a gurgling waterflow outside his house. Overjoyed he asked his mother as to whether Jesus Christ had passed by to which his mother narrated what had happened. Wahab said, "We cannot stay, gather your things so that we may hurry to join Hossein b. Ali!"

Wahab, his mother Umm Wahab, and his newlywed wife, hurried and joined the caravan of Imam Hossein(A). The Imam(A) greeted them and had a private conversation with Wahab. Wahab had fallen in love, *the* Jesus he had believed in his whole life was now standing in front of him in flesh. He, alongside his family, converted to Islam before Imam Hossein(A), and joined them towards Karbala.

Now, time had come for Wahab to battle. He took Imam Hossein's(A) permission and bid farewell to his mother and wife. Umm Wahab told her daughter-in-law, "Can you imagine that this man who yesterday was a shy bridegroom and who blushed before you, is the same warrior standing before you today?!"
Wahab mounted his horse and took off towards the battlefield. It was as if Jesus(A) himself rode. He spoke to the people, admonishing them, and when that did not help, he battled. He fought courageously, spiritually, and strongly. The enemy kept on firing arrows, hitting him with spears so that his helmet would fall off. As he stood there, bloodstained with his wavy hair and beard, he painted a picture of none other than the glory of Jesus(A) standing. They knocked him down and almost killed him. Perhaps he was already dead when they crucified him and brought him to Shimr, where they cut his head off. A rider took Wahab's head, rode close to the tents and threw the head before Umm Wahab, so as to pour salt to her wounds.
However, Umm Wahab picked her son's head, kissed it and threw it back, shouting, "That which I have given in the path of God, I do not want to be returned."

The head hit the rider and he fell dead.
May God be pleased with Wahab!

Two brothers on each side

Amr b. Qarazah al-Ansari took permission from Imam Hossein(A), advanced and called,

"al-Ansar surely know that I will
defend their honour steadily,
With a strike of a young man, who
doesn't
back off from his enemy,
I give my life in Hossein's
honourability!"

He led a fight displaying his longing for the Master of Universe. He fought fearlessly, ending many of Ibn Ziyad's soldiers. His fighting emphasized his great skills. He faced every arrow fired at Imam Hossein(A). In the same manner, he met every enemy strike with great ability. If Amr was alive, no harm had come to Imam Hossein(A). Nonetheless, his increasing wounds and injuries eventually knocked him down. Laying down, loosing huge amount of blood, he turned to Imam Hossein(A), and said, "O son of God's Prophet! Have I fulfilled my promise?!"
The Imam(A) replied, "Yes! You will be in paradise before me! Send my greetings to the Holy Prophet(S) and inform him that I am coming!"
Then Amr was martyred. May God be pleased with him! His brother, Ali b. Qazarah, had chosen the enemy side.

He called, "O Hossein! O liar and son of a liar! You have misguided my brother, fooled him, and killed him!"
Imam Hossein(A) replied, "Indeed, God did not misguide your brother. Rather, He guided him, and you went astray!"
Ali b. Qazarah exclaimed, "May God kill me if I do not kill you or die trying!" He then rushed to attack the Imam(A).
Nafi b. Hilal al-Muradi al-Jamalai stopped him, struck him, and threw him to the ground.
An enemy soldier attacked Nafi and dragged Ali b. Qarazah away.
On the Night of Ashura, Nafi had written his name on all his arrows and as he fired them, advancing, he recited,

"I am Jamali! I follow the religion of Alawi [Ali]!"

An enemy solider by the name of Muzahim b. Huraith, got excited and shouted, "Believe in the religion of Uthman!"
Nafi stroke back, "You follow the religion of Satan!", where Nafi attacked Muzahim and ended him. In addition to wounded soldiers, Nafi killed 12 of them, until his arms were crushed, and he was captured by Shimr. He was brought to Omar b. Sa'd, while blood dripped off his beard.
Omar said, "Woe upon you, Nafi! What have you done to yourself?!"
Nafi replied, "My Lord knows what I have done! By God, I killed 12 of your men, in addition to those I

injured. Had I not had only one arm, you would never been able to capture me!"
Shimr said to Omar b. Sa'd, "Kill him!"
To which Omar b. Said replied, "Kill him yourself!"
Shimr drew out his sword as Nafi said, "By God, if you were a Muslim, you would be terrified over the way in which you will face God, with our blood on your hands. All praise is due to God who allowed the worst of His creation to take our lives!"
Then Shimr killed Nafi in cold blood. May God be pleased with Nafi!

There was chaos and disorder in the war ranks. There were combats and duels in every side and corner of the battlefield. One of Omar b. Sa'd's commanders, Amr b. Hajjaj al-Zubaidi, shouted despairingly to all soldiers, "O fools! Do you know whom you are fighting?! These fighters are men seeking death! None of you is allowed to face them in a duel! They are small-numbered and will not make it. By God, by just throw stones at them and you will kill them!"
Omar b. Sa'd exclaimed, "True! You are right!"
Thereafter, Omar b. Sa'd forbade his soldiers from duelling.

The second wave

Amr b. Hajjaj, commander of Omar b. Sa'ads right flank, approached with his troops, shouting, "O people of Kufa! Hold fast to your obedience and be united! Do not hesitate to kill whoever has gone astray from the religion, and rebelled against the emir!"

Imam Hossein(A) exclaimed, "Amr b. Hajjaj! Are you igniting the people against me?! Are we the ones who have deviated while you are steadfast? By God! You will be informed when your souls shall be taken and you will die with this action of the one who has really deviated from religion and who deserves hell!
Amr b. Hajjaj attacked Imam Hossein's(A) troops from the army's right wing faced towards Euphrates. Many were hurt and died in the clashes.

Muslim b. Awsajah

One of those who met the enemy's second wave was Muslim b. Awsajah. He led a courageous resistance against the enemy, and remained steadfast during the fight until he fell. Two of Amr b. Hajjaj's soldiers, Abd al-Rahman al-Bajali and Muslim b. Abdullah al-Dabbabi, chanted "We have killed Muslim b. Awsajah! We have killed Muslim b. Awsajah!"
When the soldiers heard this, they retreated and left Muslim b. Awsajah in a storm of dust and sand. When the storm subsided, Imam Hossein's(A) followers found Muslim on the ground, bloody and seriously injured. Yet he was still breathing when Imam Hossein(A) approached him with his dear friend, Habib b. Mazahir. Imam Hossein(A) said, "O Muslim! May God have mercy upon you!"
Then the Imam(A) recited a verse from the Holy Quran, "Among the believers are men true to what they promised Allah. Among them is he who has fulfilled his vow [to the death], and among them is he who awaits

[his chance]. And they did not alter [the terms of their commitment] by any alteration." (33:23)
Habib came closer and said, "O Muslim! It is hard for me to see you in this condition! I want to congratulate you on [achieving] paradise!"
Muslim replied with a weak voice, "May God also grant you good tidings and give you great rewards!"
Habib said, "Even though I too shall accompany you in this journey, I like to hear all your wishes, so that I may fulfill them."
Muslim pointed at Imam Hossein(A), and said, "Fight to death!"
Habib cried, "I accept your will whole-heartedly!"
Thereafter Muslim's soul departed while his body remained in the arms of those whom he loved most. May God be pleased with him.

Third wave

Shimr b. Dhil Jawshan, who was the commander of the army's left flank, attacked Imam Hossein's(A) left flank with his troops. However, the Imam's(A) companions resisted and successfully made them retreat.
Subsequently, Imam Hossein's(A) cavalry started to attack. Whichever side of the army they attacked; it would disperse. When Azarah b. Qais, commander of the enemy's cavalry, saw the dissipation of his forces from all sides, he sent a cavalier to tell Omar b. Sa'd, "Do you not see what my cavalry is going through from this small number of men?! Send all foot soldiers and archers towards them!"

Omar b. Sa'd sent Hossein b. Tamim with the command over 500 archers with armor. They advanced towards Imam Hossein's(A) cavalry and when they were within reach, they shot all their arrows at them and injured their horses. Next, they drew their swords and proceeded as foot soldiers into battle.
Nonetheless, Imam Hossein's(A) troops remained steadfast and fought bravely as the sun rose to zenith.

Amr b. Khalid Saidawi and Hanzala b. Sa'd Shabami

Amr b. Khalid Saidawi rose to join the fight, saying, "O Aba Abdullah! May I be sacrificed for you! My wish is to join your friends in martyrdom. I cannot stand to see you alone and be killed before your family!"
Imam Hossein(A) said, "You may go ahead, we will follow you and meet soon."
Therefore, he proceeded to the battlefield, fought and was martyred. May God be pleased with him!

Hanzala b. Sa'd Shabami stood before Imam Hossein(A) to protect him with his face, hands, and throat from arrows, swords, and spears. He shouted to the enemy's army, "O people! I fear your fate! I fear that you will be afflicted with the same punishment that fell on the people of Noah, Aad, Thamud, and others after them. God never wishes to oppress His servants. O people! I fear for you on the day of Judgment, when you will try to escape and find no helper or shelter. O people! Do not kill Hossein, otherwise you will be punished by God!"
Then he recited the verse of the Holy Quran, *"Moses said to them [i.e., the magicians summoned by*

Pharaoh], 'Woe to you! Do not invent a lie against Allah or He will exterminate you with a punishment; and he has failed who invents [such falsehood].'" (20:61)
Then he turned towards Imam Hossein(A) and said, "May I go to our Lord and join our brothers?"
Imam Hossein(A) said, "Go towards that which is better for you than this world and what it contains. Go to the kingdom in which there is no destruction!"
Then Hanzala ran ahead and fought bravely, like the great fighters, endured all wounds and gained martyrdom. May Allah be pleased with him!

Fourth wave

Shimr b. Dhil Jawshan led the fourth wave of attacks, this time targeting the tents. He hit the Imam's(A) tent and shouted, "Give me a torch of fire to burn the tent and everyone in it!"
When the women of Imam Hossein's(A) caravan heard this, they screamed and ran out. Imam Hossein(A), himself distanced from the tents, strongly exclaimed, "O Ibn Dhil Jawshan! Are you asking for fire to burn down my tent?! May God burn you with His fire!"
However, Shimr's action was met with repulsion from his own party. One soldier told him, "This does not befit you; do you wish to kill women and children?!"
Another soldier stepped forth and said, "I have not heard something more hideous than what you said or seen a behaviour eviler than yours. Have you become one who intimidates women?!"

Zoheir b. Qayn, along with ten companions, rushed to safeguard and successfully drove Shimr and his soldiers away from the tents.

Midday prayer

When Abu Thumama b. Amr al-Saidi saw what happened he burst out to Imam Hossein(A), "O Aba Abdullah! May I be sacrificed for you! I see how these people are approaching you. By God! You shall not be killed before I am killed defending you! If God wills, I wish to meet my Lord after I have performed the prayer, whose time has come."
Imam Hossein(A) raised his head, looked at the sun and said, "You have remembered the prayers. May God count you among those who pray and remember [Him]! Yes, time for prayer has come. Tell them to impose cease-fire so that we can pray."
The commander of archers, Hossein b. Tamim, yelled out in reply, "Your prayers will not be accepted!"
Habib b. Mazaher countered, "Do you think that the prayers of the Prophet's(S) family are not accepted whilst yours are, you donkey?!" Afterwards Habib rushed towards Ibn Tamim and pushed him down from his horse, so that his soldiers had to come to his rescue and drag him away.
One of the reasons behind Imam Hossein's(A) decision to start his revolution was to establish prayer as what was left of it in the Islamic nation was nothing but a shell devoid of spirit. The enemy's reaction to Imam Hossein's(A) wish to pray demonstrates that their prayer

was merely a tool to display good deeds in front of people, rather than inspiring them to fight for justice. Imam Hossein(A) asked Zoheir b. Qayn and Said Abdullah al-Hanafi to stand in front so that the rest of them could pray. As Imam Hossein(A) and his companions' souls ascended in prayers, they enemy's arrows were showering at them. Every arrow aimed at Imam Hossein(A) and his praying companions was stopped by Said b. Abdullah, who first blocked each with his shield and sword, then with his own body. He defended Imam Hossein's(A) life with everything he possessed. When Imam Hossein(A) said *salam* and finished prayer, Said fell to the ground and with his last breath said, "O God! Curse these people, like you cursed the people of Aad and Thamud! O God! Convey my greetings to Your Messenger(S), and let him know that the pain from the wounds we have suffered is for the desire of the reward of protecting his family!" Thereafter, he attained martyrdom. As well as the wounds caused by swords and spears, there were 13 arrows found on his body. May God be pleased with him.

Habib b. Mazaher

Habib b. Mazaher al-Asadi was originally one of Imam Ali's(A) special companions. He was from Bani Asad and emigrated with Imam Ali(A) to Kufa, participating in all of the Imam's(A) battles, and was one of the members of the Imam's(A) special forces, *Shurtat Khamis*. He was one of those who sent a letter to Imam Hossein(A), but as he witnessed the people renege on

their promise, he left Kufa alongside Muslim b. Awsajah during nighttime and joined Imam Hossein(A).

Habib was a spiritual and devout man. He had memorized the Holy Quran in its fullest, and when time allowed, he completed reciting the Holy Quran during one night. He had no interest in anything materialistic and regardless of how much money and guaranties he was offered to abandon Imam Hossein(A), he rejected them saying, "We have no excuse before the Prophet(S) if we live while the Prophet's(S) son is oppressed and killed!"

Despite his 75 years of age, he rushed forth as a lion to fight. They could not stop his advancement. He fought heroically and killed numerous soldiers before Budayl b. Suraim attacked and stabbed him, so that he fell to the ground. When he tried to rise, Hossein b. Tamim came from the other side and hit him on the head with a sword. Budayl jumped on Habib and severed his head. Hossein b. Tamim took his head, hung it around the horse's neck, and rode around with it as a trophy.
Habib's martyrdom caused Imam Hossein(A) great pain, so much that the Imam(A) turned towards God and cried out, "My hope is with God's rewards for me and my companions!" May God be pleased with Habib!

John b. Huway

John was originally an African slave from Nubia, Sudan. Imam Ali(A) bought him from Fadhl b. Abbas b. Abd al-Muttalib and gave him to Abu Tharr al-Ghifari. He loved

Abu Tharr and served him until his death in Rabadha 32 A.H. Thereafter, he returned to Imam Ali(A) and stayed in his household. He was very skillful. During the night of Ashura, he sat in Imam Hossein's(A) tent and prepared all the weapons.

Now he shyly stepped forth before Imam Hossein(A) and asked permission to fight. Imam Hossein(A) looked at him and said, "You are free to choose, you are allowed to leave safely from here. You have been kind to us and you do not have to get into difficulties in our path!"
John said a sentence that shook Imam Hossein's(A) heart. He said, "O son of the Prophet of God! Do you say this because I am black and not white? Or because I am a simple servant and not a noble man? Shall I be with you in comfort and leave you in difficulties?! No! I want to carry the difficulties that you carry! By God, I shall not leave you until my blood will be mixed with yours!"
Imam Hossein's(A) tears fell and he afterwards granted John permission. He fought bravely and killed 25 soldiers before he was martyred. When he fell, Imam Hossein(A) ran to his body and made a special prayer, "O God! Illuminate his face and make his fragrance good, and let him join the good [ones] with Prophet Mohammad(S) and his family!"
When John's body was found ten days later, he still smelled wonderful, as if he was recently perfumed. May God be pleased with him!

Two young brothers

Two young men from Bani Jabi, Saif b. Harith b. Suray and Malik b. Abd b. Suray, were half-brothers. They came to Imam Hossein(A), crying.
Imam Hossein(A) asked, "Why are you crying? I hope by God that you soon will find happiness!"
They answered, "May we be sacrificed for you! By God, we are not crying for ourselves, but for you! We see you are surrounded by enemies while we cannot defend you!"
The Imam(A) said, "May God reward you with the best of rewards for your sorrow and for helping me with these people!"
These two young brothers advanced towards the enemy and started fighting in a dedicated way. For every attack, for every sword they swung, for every opponent they defeated, they turned around and said, "*Asalamo alayka ya ibn Rasolillah!"* and Imam Hossein(A) would answer, "*Wa alaykom as-salam wa rahmatollah!*"
They fought until they attained martyrdom. May God be pleased with them!

Zoheir b. Qayn

Zoheir b. Qayn stepped forth and patted Imam Hossein's(A) shoulder. The Imam(A) turned around and met his glance. Zoheir recited,

"Be steadfast, you are the guided and
the guider,
Today you shall meet you grandfather
the Prophet, Hassan and Ali, the
leader

And Ja'far, with the two wings, the brave martyr
And the lion of God, Hamza, the living martyr!"

Then he rushed towards the enemy, singing,

"I am Zoheir b. Qayn,
I chase you away from the family of Hossein!"

Zoheir, the known Islamic fighter, shone on the battlefield. Salman Farsi's word from the earlier conquest battle in Balanjar echoed inside him, "*If you meet young men from Mohammad's(S) family, be then happier for fighting with them than you are over the spoils of war you received today!"*
Today Zoheir was another Zoheir. Today Zoheir was driven by the love to Imam Hossein(A)! Zoheir had been everywhere; he had fought shoulder to shoulder beside Hurr. He had attacked Shimr and chased him away from the tents. He had protected Imam Hossein(A) and all his companions during prayer. Undeniably, his body must have been covered with wounds and arrows. But that did not prevent his advancement. He roared ahead. Enemies were cut from his path like severed branches. He killed a great number of soldiers before Kathir b. Abdullah al-Sha'bi and Muhajir b. Aws overpowered him and killed him. May God be pleased with Zoheir!

Abes b. Abi Shabib al-Shakeri

Abes b. Abi Shabib al-Shakeri belonged to Kufas known personalities. He was a powerful rhetoric and sincere devotee. His whole tribe were known as brave warriors and devoted followers of Ahl al-Bait(A), with great love for Imam Ali(A). When Muslim b. Aqil presented Imam Hossein's(A) letter in Mukhtar's house, Abes was the first to rise and join, followed by Habib, having 18,000 people swear an oath allegiance to Muslim. Abes then took Muslim's letter to Imam Hossein(A) in Mecca and from there joined his caravan.

By now, most of Imam Hossein's(A) companions had fallen in Karbala. The sun was burning. Abes looked at his servant Shawdhab. They had a very close relationship. Abes asked, "What do you wish to do?" whereupon, Shawdhab answered, "I want to defend the son of the Prophet(S), alongside you."

Abes said, "I expected nothing less than that of you. If I had anything more beloved to me than you, I would have sent it before me to the battlefield. Today is the last day to act, tomorrow is Judgement Day and no action is of any use!"

Abes looked at how his servant ran out and fought bravely. Maybe Abes wanted to know how it felt to have something you love be killed before you, to get a sense of what Imam Hossein(A) went through. When Shawdhab fell, Abes's tears must have fell as well. He could not carry himself any longer. He approached Imam Hossein(A) and said, "O Aba Abdullah! I swear upon God that there is nothing in the whole wide world that is more beloved to me than you! If I could keep away the oppression from you with something more valuable than my life and blood, I would have done so!"

Rabi b. Tamim recognized Abes as he rushed forth to the battlefield. Rabi had seen him in other battles and knew he was the bravest of all men. So, he told Ibn Sa'd, "This man is the lion of all lions. This is Ibn Shabib, let no one go forth to face him!"
Abes called and shouted for someone to face him, but no one dared to approach the battlefield. When Abes realized no one wanted to come, he stormed against the army and dispersed the troops. He was alone, they were many where he ran and they fled.
Omar b. Sa'd screamed, "Stone him!"
Thus, they started throwing stones at him.
Abes roared, "Do you think stones will frighten me?!"
Then he took off his armor, hit his chest and cried out, "Here, throw at my chest!"
A soldier shouted, "Have you gone mad?!"
Abes replied, "Yes! The love for Hossein has made me mad!"
Rabi b. Tamim swore by God that he saw Abes kill a huge amount of men while injuring and scaring off the rest!
Eventually, with difficulties they surrounded and overpowered him. The soldiers killed him, severed his head and started sending it around, fighting over who actually killed him.
Omar b. Sa'd burst out, "Stop bickering! I swear to God, not a single person could have killed this man!"
Imam Hossein(A) carried Abes's headless body back to the tents. May God be pleased with him!

Bashur al-Hadhrami and Suwaid al-Kath'ami

Bashir b. Amr al-Hadhrami and Suwaid b. Omar al-Ka'thami were the remaining companions alive, except for Imam Hossein's(A) family.
Bashir saw Imam Hossein(A) prepare to go out in battle. What were the thoughts and emotions he got by this glance? Maybe he thought, *how can Imam Hossein(A) prepare for battle while I am still alive?!* This sight must have affected him greatly, because he instantly rushed out to battle, fought bravely and attained martyrdom. May God be pleased with him!

Suwaid was a spiritual person and always busy in worship. He rushed forth and fought as a lion freed from its cage. He endured many blows until he could no longer move. He fell unconscious, bloody and mangled among the dead corpses. All believed him to be dead and looted him of his sword.
Later when Imam Hossein(A) fell and the screams, "Hossein has been killed!" spread like wildfire, he regained consciousness. He shambled up, took hold of a dagger and moved halting towards Imam Hossein(A). He again attacked the enemy until he was killed. May God be pleased with him!

The martyrdom of the family members

It is said that Imam Hossein's(A) companions went ahead of him in battle, one after another. A poet described it this way:

A group has come forth to crush
corrupt facades,

They sit upon excellent horses in rows,
They have filled their armor with their chests,
They compete with each other in giving their lives first.

Ali Akbar

When all of Imam Hossein's(A) companions attained martyrdom and not one remained except the household of the Imam(A), Ali b. Hossein; most beautiful, and most resembling the Holy Prophet(S), sought permission to battle. All companions had already sacrificed themselves for the Imam(A), so when time came for the family members, Imam Hossein(A) also wanted to sacrifice the most valuable possession of his, namely his oldest son. As Ali Akbar, 27 years of age, sought permission on his own accord, the Imam(A) looked at him sorrowfully, gave him permission, and wept with lowered eyes as he said, "O God! Be witness that the youth that has hastened to the battlefield against the enemy, is the most resembling to your Prophet(S). When we longed for Your Prophet(S), we would look at him!" When Ali Akbar bid his farewell to the women of the household, Imam Hossein(A) had to tear him away from their embraces. He was so loved by everyone there. It was as if they hugged and bid farewell to the Prophet(S) himself. One of the moments a father feel pride is when he beholds his full-grown righteous son pass by, upright in all his glory. Maybe that was the reason behind Imam Hossein's(A) calling for Ali Akbar, as he was approaching the battlefield, to once again pass by him.

Thereafter, Ali Akbar rushed to the battlefield, reciting,

"I am Ali ibn Hossein ibn Ali,
By the Ka'ba, we are closest to the
Nabi,
By God, an illegitimate over us cannot
rule,
I will support my father, and against
you my sword fuel,
I am a young Hashemi
With a sword of a Qurayshi"

He led a brave fight and killed a great amount of the enemies. They dared not meet him. Many horsemen fell down to the ground by his first wave of attack. For every killed soldier, his thirst would increase. He returned to his father, and said, "O dear father! Thirst almost killed me, and the weight of my sword has weakened me Is there any water available?"

Imam Hossein(A) wept, and said, "O my dear son! I am even thirstier than you! Endure a bit longer. Very soon you will come to meet your grandfather Mohammad(S), who will quench you thirst, whereupon you will never suffer from thirst again!"
Instead, Imam Hossein(A) gave Ali Akbar his ring. What are the secrets between an Imam(A) and his adult son?! Ali Akbar is aware that there is no water and he is no child. Why does he return, talk about his thirst and the want of water? And why do Imam Hossein(A) answer by expressing that he is even thirstier and then

proceeds to give his ring? Was the thirst truly for water or was it for something else?!
Ali Akbar returned to the battlefield and fought the greatest fight. A huge number of men fell. Still, they dared not face him in battle. Murrah b. Munqidh al-Abdi swung his sword with full strength and hit Ali Akbar on the head, so that he fell to the ground. The blow cost him his orientation and his sight became obscure with blood. He called, "O father! Accept my Salam! May God protect you! Here is my grandfather, sending his salutations to you, stating: Hasten to us!"
The way in which Ali Akbar sent his *salam* was more of a farewell than a greeting. He was not expecting to hear an answer. As he fell, the enemy stormed him like flies to honey. The enemy knew very well that the successor of Imamat after Imam Hossein(A) was named Ali and as Ali Akbar was the Imam's(A) oldest son, the enemy wanted to ensure annihilation of the lineage of Imamat once and for all. They slaughtered him in the worst way possible. When Imam Hossein(A) rushed to his ripped son, he cried out seven times from the depth of his heart, "My son Ali! My son Ali!" He placed his cheek on his cheek and said, "May God kill those who killed you. How dare they be so bold to defy God and insult His Prophet's(S) honour?"
The same Imam Hossein(A), who would repeatedly try to have mercy and guide the enemy, would now curse the enemy, which only occurred a few times. The Imam(A) called on Omar b. Sa'd, "May God cut off your lineage as you have cut mine!"
The Imam(A) said to his son, crying, "O my son, after you this world is only misery!"

He then took a handful of Ali Akbar's blood and threw it up towards the skies. Not a drop fell down. One of the few times Lady Zaynab came out of the tent by herself was during Ali Akbar's martyrdom. She ran and threw herself on top of the body, crying. Imam Hossein(A) sent her back to the tents and called upon the youth of Bani Hashim. They gathered all of Ali Akbar's body parts and carried him back to the tents. May God's peace and blessings be upon Ali Akbar!

The Youth of Bani Hashim

Afterwards, one after another from the Imam's(A) household rushed towards the battle and won the honour of martyrdom. The sons of Lady Zaynab, Mohammad and Aun ran out together and fought until they were surrounded and killed. The sons of Imam Hassan(A) fought bravely. The sons and grandsons of Aqil rushed and battled. One after another, they drank from the cup of martyrdom.
The Imam(A) called, "O my cousins! O members of my family! Be patient. By God, after this day you shall never be dishonoured again!"

Qasem b. Hassan

The young teenager, Qasem b. Hassan, approached the Imam(A) twice for permission to battle. However, the first time the Imam(A) replied, "You are too young", and the second time, "You are the only son to your mother." Qasem returned heartbroken to his mother, Umm Farwa, and sought her advice on how to convince his uncle to

let him go. Umm Farwa then remembered Imam Hassan(A) had left her a letter to give Qasem on a day like this. Qasem received the letter and as he read it, tears fell down, he kissed it and his mother, then ran to his uncle to have him read it.
Imam Hossein(A) read the letter by Imam Hassan(A),

"Qasem, my son, a day will come when my brother Hossein will stand alone before thousands of enemies. On that day, Islam will have to be saved through sacrifice. You must represent me on that day!"

The memory of Imam Hassan(A) woke emotions within Imam Hossein(A). His tears fell down on his blessed cheeks. He brought Imam Hassan's(A) turban and placed it on Qasem's head. Now it was no longer Imam Hossein(A) who gave permission to his nephew, it was Imam Hassan(A) himself. When Qasem came out with the turban, everyone saw Imam Hassan(A) in his glory. Imam Hassan(A) was known to be the most handsome one in all of Arabia. If the beauty of Prophet Yusuf was alike the moon, then Imam Hassan(A) was the sun of beauty itself. He was the complete manifestation of God's *Jamal* (beauty) and Qasem inherited this beauty. A soldier from the enemy side said he saw a youth with a moonlike shining face come to the battlefield. Murmur was heard from the enemy ranks, "How can we destroy such a beautiful face?"
Qasem presented himself and as soon as the enemy understood him to be the son of Imam Hassan(A), their

hate ignited. Despite his young age, where his sword almost touched the ground, he brought down a great number of enemies. He battled bravely, but the spiteful enemy surrounded him eventually. Ibn Fuzayl al-Azdi knocked him down and hit him, causing a wound on his head. Qasem called, "O my uncle!"
Imam Hossein(A) stormed like an eagle and attacked Ibn Fuzayl with his sword. Ibn Fuzayl lifted his arm in order to protect himself as Imam Hossein(A) cut it from the elbow. Ibn Fuzayl screamed so loud for his army so that they would come to his rescue. Mounted on their horses, they trampled the beautiful body of Qasem, and so he attained martyrdom. When the war storm calmed down, Imam Hossein(A) was seen standing next to the head of Qasem, hitting the ground with his feet. He cried out, "Those who killed you are secluded from God's mercy! Your father and grandfather will demand your vengeance on Judgement Day. By God, it is painful for your uncle to hear your call and not be able to answer or help you. By God, your uncle's enemies are many while his supporters are few."
Then Imam Hossein(A) embraced Qasem and carried him to where the martyrs of Bani Hashim where placed.

Abbas b. Ali

When all the champions of Bani Hashim were martyred, Abbas remained. Abbas was trained for this moment his entire life. Abbas walked beside his father for 14 years. Imam Ali(A) said regarding Abbas, "My son Abbas learned knowledge from me when he was but a child, just like a dove taking food from its mother."

Abbas was next to his father in the battle of Siffin. Today, when Abbas was in Karbala, it was as if Imam Ali(A) was in Karbala. Abbas had not only followed Imam Hossein(A) since the first day in Medina but Abbas had followed Imam Hossein(A) since the first day of his life. In Imam Hossein(A) caravan, he was the flagbearer, water carrier (*saqi*), the trainer, and mentor for all the youth of Bani Hashim. In Karbala, Abbas was the saviour. When the enemy, on the 7th of Muharram, took hold of the Euphrates and blocked the water to Imam Hossein's(A) caravan, Abbas was the one to storm through with a small unit, who crushed the blockade and brought water to the tents.

When four soldiers from Hossein's(A) party, Amr al-Saydawi, Jabir al-Salmani, Juammi al-Aidhi, and the freed slave Sa'd, attacked the enemy in group and subsequently became surrounded by the enemy, completely isolated from the camp of Imam Hossein(A), Abbas thundered forth. By himself, Abbas successfully ended the siege and saved all four of them. Now Abbas was left, alongside Imam Hossein(A). They beheld Omar b. Sa'd's army rush towards the tents, surrounding them. Imam Hossein(A) mounted a hill in order to have a better view of the camp. What did Abbas think in this situation? What did he feel? How did he intuitively know what the Imam of his time wanted of him?

The heat was excruciating. The Imam's(A) six-month-old infant, Ali Asghar, had cried some and slept some due to his thirst. The children were pale and frightened. The women were awaiting the worst possible outcome. What was required of him? It was obvious. Abbas burst towards the Euphrates. A soldier from Bani Darim

noticed Abbas sweep towards the river and called upon the other soldiers, "Idiots! Stop him from reaching Euphrates! Let him not reach the water!"
Imam Hossein(A) prayed, "O God! Let him die thirsty!"
The man turned agitated and shot an arrow, injuring the Imam's(A) chin. The Imam(A) placed his hands under the wound and when they were filled with blood, he threw it towards the sky and called, "My God! I convey my complaint to You on what is befalling Your Prophet's grandchild!"
Abbas roared through the enemy ranks until he reached Euphrates. He jumped into the river and started filling water. He cupped his hands and filled them with water; it was cold and pleasant. The enemy was now dreading the worst possible outcome; Abbas would quench his thirst and let loose his wrath upon them in full strength. However, Abbas was of a whole different caliber. The thought of even drinking while his master was thirsty did probably not even cross his mind. No, Abbas must have seen something else in the water. Maybe he beheld his own reflection, and alike his father Imam Ali(A) advancing towards death, reminded his *nafs* (soul) to prepare for it. Maybe, instead of water, Abbas saw the blood of Imam Hossein(A) that would flow like the river after his death. No one knows what Abbas saw or thought in that river, but it is known that not a single drop touched his thirsty lips. He spoke to his *nafs* poetically, but maybe he wanted to give a lesson to everyone else who is self-absorbed. He recited,

"O nafs! After Hossein you are empty,

And after him your existence has no entity,
Here Hossein shall drink from the source of death,
How can you then drink from water's cool depth?!"

The enemy stood astonished as Abbas threw the water towards the sky, he mounted his horse and rode forth. Abbas had hope. Death was a given end but maybe he could reach back to the tents with water and make it a little bit more pleasant for the children. Soldiers who tried to prevent his path were met with certain death. Troops who were trying to block the way were dispersed like leaves before a wind. However, the arrows, one after another, kept finding their way to his body. A soldier hid behind a shrubbery for an ambush, he jumped up and cut Abbas right arm.
Abbas recited,

"By God, if you cut my right arm,
I will ever defend my religion,
And defend the truthful Imam of yaqin,
The son of the pure Prophet, al-Amin!"

Abbas took his sword with his left arm and proceeded ahead. He attacked and was attacked. The arrows fell down like rain. Another soldier ambushed Abbas and cut his left arm. However, Abbas was busy fighting a greater battle, *jihad al-nafs*, whilst being in the middle of the lesser one, the external *jihad*. He recited,

"O soul, do not fear the apostates' activity,
Be delighted for the Prophet's cup filled with God's mercy,
They have cut off my left arm with their tyranny,
O Lord, in the scorching flames of fire burn them entirely."

Abbas kept on advancing. There were still hope. However, it did not last much longer as an arrow hit the water bag, emptying all its content. In reality, the arrow had hit Abbas's heart and extinguished all hope to reach the tents. Another arrow hit Abbas's eye, turning everything black. Although, for Abbas, with no water and with no Hossein, everything was already dead. A cursed soldier rode ahead and hurled a heavy iron stake at Abbas's head. Abbas fell heavily; his body filled with arrows and with no arms to embrace himself for the fall. However, when he lay there still, one eye pitch black, the other gritty and bloody, when he no longer could see the tents or Imam Hossein(A) – his last thoughts must have been with the Imam(A), now facing the enemy alone. Like hyenas, soldiers attacked the mangled and holy body of Abbas, and instead of water, Abbas drank from the cup of martyrdom. When Imam Hossein(A) approached Abbas's body, he cried out, "Now my spine has been split!" May God's peace and blessing be upon Abbas.

A call for help

When all had fallen, Imam Hossein(A) remained. He looked upon the fields and saw the bodies of his companions, the men of Bani Hashim cut to pieces. Blood was mixed with the sand of the desert under the burning sun. He heard the women's and children's hum of voices from the tents. Ahead of him 30,000 soldiers stood with tense nervous gazes. Imam Hossein(A) faced them and called, "Is there anyone to defend the family of the Holy Prophet(S)?! Is there any believer from among you who worry about us for the sake of God? Is there any supporter who wishes to support us for the sake of God? Is there any helper who wishes to help us for the sake of God?"

The silence was deafening.

The Imam(A) turned towards the bodies of the martyrs and cried out, "O Habib b. Mazaher! O Zoheir b. Qayn! O Muslim b. Awsaja! O brave ones! O fighters on the day of tragedy! Why do you not heed my call when I call upon you and do not come when I summon you?! You are sleeping, and I wish you to wake up from you sweet sleep! Here are the women of the Prophet's(S) household without any defenders after you! O generous ones! Wake up from you sleep and defend the family of the Prophet(S)!"

When the women heard the cry of the Imam(A), their weeping increased. Imam Ali b. Hossein Sajjad(A), whose health had deteriorated significantly on the Day of Ashura, and who fluctuated between consciousness and unconsciousness due to his high fever, heard his father's(A) call. With great effort, he stood up and halted out of the tent, a cane bearing his weight. He was incredibly weakened and could barely lift up a sword.

When Imam Hossein(A) caught his sight, he called on Umm Kulthum and said, "Take him back to the tents so that the earth is not devoid of the sons of Mohammad(S)!"

Ali Asghar

There was another one, transitioning between sleep and awareness. He was the youngest child of Imam Hossein(A), the six-month old Ali Asghar. When Imam Hossein(A) called, Ali Asghar's cries intensified. He caught his father's attention. It was as if Ali Asghar, in his own way, declared his willingness to help and fight for the Imam of his time. Imam Hossein(A) entered the tent, lifted Ali Asghar, to then kiss and hug him.
The Imam(A) requested his family for old and worn garments to wear underneath his clothes. He got a few garments and proceeded to cut holes in them, and then put them on. Then he took a shirt and Yemeni-trousers, made holes in them as well to then put them on. He did this so that they would not loot his clothes after his martyrdom. And if they were to do that, he would still have a thin layer left to cover his body. The Imam(A) bid farewell to the women and the children, then he left the tent with Ali Asghar in his arms. Ali Asghar was now before the entire army. His thirst was like that of a fish on land that has splashed for a while and finally takes its last breaths by opening and closing its mouth slowly. Imam Hossein(A) called, "O people! You have murdered my household and all of my companions, except this dying thirsty infant! If you do not care for me, have at least compassion for this thirsty child!"

No one reacted, except a humanlike demon. His name was Harmala b. Khalil. He was a skilled archer. He aimed and fired a three-headed arrow that hit Ali Asghar's thin throat and nailed him to his father's chest. Imam Hossein(A) cried out, "O God! Judge between us and the people who called us for aid, but instead killed us!"

With these words the Imam(A) equated his own death with that of Ali Asghar's. He placed his cupped hand underneath Ali Asghar's neck, until it was filled with blood, and threw the blood towards the sky. Not a single drop fell down. Imam Hossein(A) had named all of his three sons Ali in order to perplex the enemy on who was to become the Imam after him. The blood from his oldest Ali and his youngest Ali, were sent to the heavens and never reached earth. Left on earth was only the middle-child, Ali b. Hossein, Imam Sajjad(A), who witnessed this and passed out, over and over again.

Imam Hossein(A) did not know how to return to the tents with Ali Asghar. He turned to his only source of strength, "O God! This child's martyrdom is comparable to the way they slaughtered the camel of Prophet Salih!" Imam Hossein(A) dug a small grave with his sword, next to the other martyrs, and placed Ali Asghar's small bloodied body within. While other infants spend their first two years in calm and peace, in abundance, laughter, play, love and warmth, the six-month short life of Ali Asghar was a long jihad and fight. He had endured a long journey from Medina to Karbala with hardships, heat, worry, shortage of food, water and milk, and finally he had fought beside his father and attained martyrdom in his father's arms.

Although Ali Asghar was young, his bloodshed was the major contributing factor for the change of hearts and sympathy for the struggle of Imam Hossein(A). May God's peace and blessings be upon Ali Asghar!

Imam Hossein(A)

On the afternoon of Ashura, Imam Hossein(A) was completely alone. He waited for a long time. No soldier dared to approach him, and when some did come forth to fight, he rejected them, disapproving to kill them. That was the Imam(A), his mercy flowed tirelessly encompassing even the enemy, and he preferred to guide them or leave them so that they may themselves regret and not draw their swords instead of burning themselves with an eternal curse by fighting the Imam of their time. However, the enemy kept on baiting and displayed no signs of change. Imam Hossein(A) rode towards Euphrates, but the army blocked his way, so he returned and faced the army. He challenged them to battle him but they passively stood by. The Imam(A) rode in full speed straight towards the army, and every row of 30,000 soldiers backed off, with those in the foremost rows dispersing like grasshoppers.

The Imam(A) then returned to the tents, and once again bid farewell to the women and children, urging them to be patient, then went to visit Imam Sajjad(A) in his tent. Imam Sajjad(A) looked up on his father's(A) face. He saw grainy clothes, sandy hair, wounds in the face, blood splattered everywhere, a universe of hardships weighing

down his shoulders. Imam Sajjad(A) said, "Father, it seems this war, against these people, has been intense?"
Imam Hossein(A) answered, "It is right, my son, they dragged us into a full-scale war."
Imam Sajjad(A) said, "But did you not present yourself to the people? Did you not tell them who you are and which family you belong to?"
Imam Hossein(A) answered, "I told them my son, I told them everything."
Imam Sajjad(A) then asked a critical question, "Why father?! How can they, after all that you have presented before them, still wage war against you?!"
Imam Hossein(A) then recited a verse from the Holy Quran as an answer;
Satan has overcome them and made them forget the remembrance of Allah. *"Those are the party of Satan. Unquestionably, the party of Satan - they will be the losers." (58:19)*
Imam Hossein(A) then summoned his struggle from start to end in a single sentence, as a last word to his son and the Imam after him. He said, "My son, stand up for truth even if it is bitter."

While the Imam(A) bid farewell to his family, Omar b. Sa'd gave orders to shoot the tents with arrows, of which some hit their targets and teared parts of the tents, terrifying the household of the Imam(A). So, Imam Hossein(A) returned to the battlefield. He chose a place nearby to be his base. Thereafter, the Imam(A) initiated his attack waves. He fought like a sea, he drowned the enemy in a wave of attacks, then withdrew to his base, reciting loudly, "*La hawla wala quwwata illa billahil*

a'liyyil a'zeem (There is no might nor power except with God the Mighty)." Maybe he did that to calm the women and children, and inform them that he was still alive, protecting them.

For every passing moment, Imam Hossein's(A) face shone more brightly. Abdullah al-Bariqi, one of the opposing soldiers exclaimed, "By God, I have never seen a man lose his children, family members, and friends, and bear the sorrow of all tragedies, yet still remain in harmony, and display so much courage and strength of will! By God! I have never seen anyone like him, neither before or after him! All soldiers from right and left are fleeing like goats from a lion!"

The enemy's cavalry tried to surround the Imam(A); however, he dispersed their physical attacks whilst trying to reform their hearts, saying, "Are you baiting each other to kill me?! By God, the killing of me will cause more wrath than that of any other! By God, God will honour me and dishonour you. He will avenge me in ways you cannot even imagine! By God, if you kill me, God will cause a disruption amongst you so that you will kill each other and shed each other's blood!"

These waves of attacks lasted a certain time until Shimr b. Dhil Jawshan rode around, coming from the back alongside his troops, and separated the Imam(A) from the tents. Imam Hossein(A) shouted at them, "Woe upon you, O followers of Abu Sufyan! If you do not have a religion, and do not fear life after this and the Day of Judgement, at least be free and noble in this world!"

Shimr shouted, "O son of Fatima! What are you saying?"

Imam Hossein(A) answered, "I say I am fighting you

and you are fighting me. The women have nothing to do with this. Face me, I am alive, these aggressive and ignorant people are not to harm my family!"
Shimr said, "Then be it your way, O son of Fatima!"
The soldiers of Shimr were reluctant to attack the Imam(A) so Shimr ordered them to shoot arrows at him and arrows from everywhere rained upon him.
Thereafter, the enemy started attacking him and he continued fighting. He received many wounds and injuries. It was as if Imam Hossein's(A) body was made of all the 72 champions, and in order to reach him, the enemy had to go through and kill each one of them, all over again, thus wounding the Imam severely.
Imam Hossein(A) stopped for a moment to rest when a soldier threw a stone at him, hitting him on the forehead. As the Imam(A) wiped the blood from his head, a soldier shot a poisoned three-headed arrow at his blessed chest.
The Imam(A) said, "In the name of God and by God, and for the sake of God and by the religion that God's messenger came with."
The Imam(A) lifted his eyes towards the sky and said, "O God! You know that these people are killing a man who is the only grandchild of Your Messenger(S) on this earth."
Afterward, he pulled out the arrow and blood streamed out from the wound, all while the poison drained his strength. Omar b. Sa'd approached Imam Hossein(A) when Lady Zaynab came out and called, "O Omar b. Sa'd! Is Aba Abdullah being killed while you are standing by?!" Omar b. Sa'd turned away and backed off. Soldiers nearby witnessed his tears falling down on his cheeks and beard.

Malik b. Nasr seized the moment, he cursed at the Imam(A) and swung his sword. It cut right through the helmet and reached the Imam's(A) head. The helmet was drowned with his holy blood. Zar'a b. Sharik al-Tamimi stroke the Imam's(A) left shoulder and Sinan b. Anas hit an arrow close to the Imam's(A) throat. Imam Hossein(A) pulled out the arrow and pressed his hand on the wound in order to stop the bleeding, His hand was all covered in blood. He stroked his hand on his head and beard, and said, "I will meet my Lord, covered in my own blood, while I have been deprived from my rights." Salih b. Wahb al-Ju'fi rode forth and violently hit the Imam(A) on his side, with a spear so that he fell off his horse and on his right cheek.

Abdullah b. Hassan

Imam Hassan(A) had a young son, around 8 or 9 years of age, named Abdullah. He grew up in Imam Hossein's(A) home and was very attached to him. Imam Hossein(A) had given instructions to Lady Zaynab to keep an eye on Abdullah and not let him out of her sight as he would not bear what would come to happen. When Imam Hossein(A) fell from his horse, Abdullah stood with Lady Zaynab and saw what had happened. Abdullah broke away from Lady Zaynab's grip and stormed towards Imam Hossein(A). Lady Zaynab tried to stop him, but he exclaimed, "By God, I will never be separated from my uncle!"
Bahr b. Ka'b walked towards the Imam(A) with a sword in his hand. Abdullah shouted, "Woe upon you! Do you want to kill my uncle?!"

Bahr swung his sword; however, Abdullah had thrown himself on the Imam(A) to protect him, and lost his arm. Abdullah cried out, "O uncle!"
Imam Hossein(A) embraced his nephew and said, "O my nephew! Be patient for the pain you have endured!"
Harmala b. Kahlil shot an arrow at Abdullah and killed him while he was in his Imam's(A) arms. May God's peace and blessings be upon Abdullah b. Hassan.

The Master of martyrs

While Imam Hossein(A) remained lying in a pool of blood, mangled, injured, with his nephew's lifeless body on him, Shimr b. Dhil Jawshan stormed the tents and once again yelled, "Give me fire so that I may burn these tents with everyone in them!"
Imam Hossein(A) called to him, "O Ibn Dhil Jawshan! You are requesting fire to burn my family?! May God burn you in hell!"
Shimr shouted to his soldiers, "What are you waiting for?!" Imam Hossein(A) was surrounded on all sides by Shimr's troops, among them Abd al-Rahman b. Ziyad, Qash'am b. Amr al-Ju'fi, Salih b. Wahb, Sinan b. Anas Nakhai, and Khawli b. Yazid.
Despite all injuries and extreme fatigue from all the fighting, the Imam(A) managed to sit up with great effort, but he could not stand up and instead he fell down in *sujood* (forehead on the ground in worship) reciting, "O God! My satisfaction is Your satisfaction, I am submissive to Your will, I have no Beloved God except you, O Helper to those who need help!"

Sinan b. Anas stormed ahead and pushed his spear in Imam Hossein's(A) ribs so that he again fell down to the ground and then he pushed the spear into his chest. Imam Hossein(A) lay down for death, taking his last breaths. His only concern was what befall the tents next. One of the bystanders said, "By God, I have never seen a body covered with blood more beautiful than his, neither a face more glowing than his! The light of his face made me doubtful on him being dead or alive."
Shimr incited the soldiers to behead Imam Hossein(A), but no one dared. Khawli b. Yazid went ahead to do so but started shaking and backed off. Finally, Shimr himself advanced. In his last breaths, Imam Hossein(A) kept on trying to save his worst enemy from committing the greatest crime in human history. The Imam(A) said to Shimr to go and to not do this. While the Imam(A) was watching him, Shimr kicked the Imam(A) and sat on his body. He got hold of Imam Hossein's(A) beard and hit him twelve times with the sword. No one knows exactly what happened next. Imam Hossein(A) shone so brightly that everyone was bedazzled. The moments that followed, Shimr was seen holding the head of Imam Hossein(A). He turned the head towards the tents while they were igniting them with fire and the women and children ran out shouting.

The soldiers stormed in like hungry vultures and started ransacking everything in their way. Khawli b. Yazid was given the responsibility of Imam Hossein's(A) head. Ishaq b. Haubah looted the Imam's(A) shirt and put it on. Later he suffered leprosy and lost his hair. The Imam's(A) trousers were looted by Bahr b. Ka'b; he

later became bedridden due to the paralysis of both his legs. The Imam's(A) turban was taken by Akhnas b. Morthad, who later lost his mind and became a madman. The shoes of the Imam(A) were looted by Aswad b. Khalid while Bajdal b. Salim took the Imam's(A) ring by cutting his blessed finger off.
The soldiers competed with each other by hijacking the tents and looting the women's possessions. They went so far that they snatched away all outer mantles off the women's shoulders. The Prophet's(S) daughters rushed out screaming and crying because of their separation from their protectors and beloved ones. Imam Hossein's(A) three-year old daughter Roqayya had her earrings torn off her ears. Not even Imam Hossein's(A) prayer mat was spared. The soldiers saw Imam Sajjad(A) lying sick and weak, asking each other if he too shall be killed, however one soldier said, "It is only a sick youth, let him be."

On the orders of Ubaydullah b. Ziyad, Omar b. Sa'd shouted to his army, "Who is willing to stamp on the back and chest of Hossein with his horse?" Ten soldiers came forth. Those ten rode on Imam Hossein(A) with their horses' hooves, crushing the back and chest of the Imam(A). All of them illegitimate and who later received great rewards by Ibn Ziyad.

After the martyrdom of Imam Hossein(A), a bad storm came and colored the sky red, blinding everyone and people feared that the divine wrath had come. As such, they waited hours until the storm had subsided.

Lady Zaynab's farewell to the martyrs

When the soldiers had driven out the women and children from the tents, they cried out, "For the sake of God, take us to the place where Imam Hossein(A) became a martyr."
When the women saw the bodies of the martyrs they cried uncontrollably. One of the soldiers said, "By God! I can never forget how Zaynab bt. Ali wept over Hossein!"
Lady Zaynab cried with an excruciatingly sad voice, saying, "O Mohammad! May God's blessings be upon you! This is your Hossein lying with a looted body, bleeding from his organs. Woe upon this tragedy! Your daughters are captives! I turn with my complaint to God, to Mohammad al-Mostafa, to Ali al-Murthada, to Fatima Zahra, and to Hamza Sayyid al Shuhada! O Mohammad! Here is Hossein, killed by illegitimates, in this desert where the wind is covering him with sand. We beseech protection from all this affliction and grief, and all these hardships and tragedies that you have undergone, O Aba Abdullah! It is as if my grandfather the Prophet(S) have left this world today.
O followers of Mohammad! These are the children of Mohammad treated as slaves!
O Mohammad! Your daughters are captives and your children have been murdered while their bodies are covered with sand by desert winds. Here is Hossein, whose head is cut off from his nape, without a turban or a mantel!
May my father be sacrificed for the beloved whose troops were killed and his tent destroyed! May my father

be sacrificed for the beloved who took on a journey without hope of return or survival! May my father be sacrificed for the beloved whose life I am ready to sacrifice my life for! May my father be sacrificed for the beloved, who has become martyr, who died thirsty with dried lips! May my father be sacrificed for him whose beard was drowned in blood! May my father be sacrificed for the honoured, whose grandfather was the Messenger of God! May my father be sacrificed for the one who is the grandchild of the Holy Prophet!"
Lady Zaynab's farewell to the martyrs had all surrounding soldiers tearing up. Sakina, the daughter of Imam Hossein(A), ran and threw herself on her father's body, embraced it and cried until some men came and separated her from it.

CHAPTER 4: KUFA

Omar b. Sa'd sent Imam Hossein's(A) head to Ubaydullah b. Ziyad under the responsibility of Khawli b. Yazid. He even commanded that the heads of Imam Hossein's(A) companions and family members be sent with Shimr b. Dhil Jawshan, Qais b. Ashath and Amr b. Hajjaj, to bring them to Kufa. Omar b. Sa'd stayed in Karbala until next midday as he transported the remaining members of Imam Hossein's(A) family. He made the women, who were still deeply traumatized by the cruel tragedy that had befallen them, travel while being chained like slaves on camelbacks. When Ibn Sa'd reached Kufa, people gathered to watch, as if it was a parade. A woman, looking out from her window, asked, "Where do you come from? Who are you?"
They answered, "We are the captives from the Holy Prophet's(S) household!" This woman rushed out of her home to distribute clothes and mantles for them to fold themselves in.
Alongside the women there were a few men; Imam Sajjad(A), who had lost weight due to his disease, Hassan b. Hassan Muthanna who had fought beside Imam Hossein(A) and got injured, passed out and thought to be dead, Zaid b. Hassan, and also Amr b. Hassan.
On the Day of Ashura all men in the caravan of Imam Hossein(A) fought with their bodies for their Imam. After Ashura, the women's struggle began, and they fought with their words; with the *jihad* of speech, they shook hearts, cleared away darkness, and teared down the black cloth of ignorance.

Sermon of Lady Zaynab

The Kufans could not recognize the captives in their state but as soon as they realized who they truly were, the survivors from Imam Hossein's(A) caravan, they started lamenting and crying. Imam Sajjad(A) said, "Are you grieving and crying for us? Who did really kill us?!" Lady Zaynab pointed at them and asked them to be quiet; this gesture of hers took people's breath away and there was an immediate silence. Thereafter, she started to speak, "O people of Kufa! O people of falsehood and betrayal! Are you weeping? May your tears never stop and your grief never end. You are alike '*she who untwisted her spun thread after it was strong [by] taking your oaths as [means of] deceit between you*' (*the Holy Quran 16:92*) Do you have anything in yourselves except audacity, stains of disgrace, bitterness, insincere servility like that of slave girls' [to their masters], and the anxiety of enmity?! Do you have [thriving] pasture over [fertilized] land? Or do you have [surfaces] of silver on your graves?! What wretchedness have you put forth for yourselves that you have caused the wrath of God?! And in His punishment, you shall forever be!
So, you cry and weep? Yes, by God you will cry much and laugh little. Surely, you have earned nothing but shame and dishonour that you will never be able to wash away! How will you answer your own culpability of the killing of the grandchild of the Seal of prophethood and Source of the message, the Master of the youth of paradise, the Shelter of the pious, the Shelter of the despaired, the Light of guidance and the Reliever in

hardships?! Surely, the misery you are carrying leads far away from [the path of mercy]. Indeed, [your] strife has given [you] no gain, and hands have perished, and treaties has led to loss, and you returned with the wrath of God upon you, and were covered with poverty and abasement.

Woe upon you, O people of Kufa! Are you aware that you have hurt the flesh and blood of the Holy Prophet(S)?! Or which noble women from the Holy Prophet's(S) household you have exposed?! Or which of the Prophet's(S) blood you have shed?! Or which of his *horma* (holiness) you have violated?! Indeed, you have caused a persistent hardship; a dark, complicated, audacious, and abhorrent [act] greater than all of what the earth and heaven carry! Do you wonder why the sky was all colored in red? The punishments in the hereafter are severer and there you will not be aided, so let not the delay [of the penalty] give you pleasure as He does not hasten the execution of vengeance and He completes matters at the right time. '*Indeed, your Lord is in observation!*' (*Holy Quran 89:14*)

One in the audience recounted,

"By God, I saw people lost and confused, weeping with their hands covering their mouths. I saw a man standing next to me crying and his beard became wet due to the amount tears. He said, 'May my father and mother be sacrificed for you! Your elders are the best of elders, your youngsters are the best of youngsters, your women the best of women, and your generations the best of lines that will never be dishonoured. No can be compared to you!'"

Basir b. Khuzain, another listener, said, "On that day I heard the sermon of the daughter of Imam Ali(A), Seyyeda Zaynab, and I have never before heard a chaste and pious woman with such a rhetoric! It was as if she spoke the words of Imam Ali(A)!"

Sermon of Fatima Sughra

Fatima bt. Hossein, also called Fatima Sughra, was the oldest daughter of Imam Hossein(A). She was married to her cousin, Hassan b. Hassan Muthanna, and they were both present in Karbala. Imam Hossein(A) entrusted her with his written will that she kept and later handed over to Imam Sajjad(A). Fatima Sughra gave a burning and eloquent sermon before the people of Kufa as well. She said, "All praise and glory belong to God, as much as the number of the sand and stones and as much as the throne weighs up on the ground. I praise Him, believe in Him, trust Him, and witness that there is no god except Allah; One and Only with no partner, and that the Prophet Mohammad(S) is His servant and Messenger, whose child was slaughtered by the Euphrates without causing any harm!
O God, I seek refuge with You from the sin of uttering untruth about You and anything other than that which You have said regarding the leadership of Imam Ali b. Abu Talib(A), whose *haqq* (right) was taken from him, and who died without sin just like his son died yesterday. The martyrdom of Imam Ali(A) took place in one of God's houses, in the presence of some so-called Muslims – may misery afflict them! Those were passive before his oppression during his life until You took him

to Yourself, as his rank was elevated, his character pure, his attributes praised, and his guidance well-known. O God, never did the mockers' accusations prevent him from striving towards the goal, nor did the suffering caused by defamers. O God, You guided him to Islam whilst he was young and honoured his character during his growth. He remained a doer of good in faith and with Your Messenger(S) until You took his soul to Yourself, as he was ascetic in *dunya* (this world) and did not rush for the worldly matters. Instead, he strived towards *akhira* (hereafter), and fought in Your way, so You were pleased with him, chose him, and guided him to the Straight Path.

As of now, O people of Kufa, O the people of treachery, betrayal, and pride! Surely, we are the Ahl al-Bait – household of the Prophet(S). God has tested us with you and He has tested you with us, in a righteous trial. He bestowed us His knowledge and understanding, so we are the keepers of His knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, and His [guiding] *hujja* (proof) on earth, and on His land for His servants.

He bestowed upon us with His generosity, and honoured us with His Prophet Mohammad(S) above all others of His creation. But you refuted us, denied us, and saw it fit to fight us, and steal and loot our possessions! You have before this killed my grandfather Ali and the blood of us, Ahl al-Bait, is dripping from your swords! All of this is a consequence of the hate and bitterness within you from the past!

To commit all these crimes has delighted your eyes, and your hearts were joyous as you spoke and acted against God. And you schemed, but God is the best of planners!

Therefore, do not rejoice your deeds, the shedding of our blood, and the ransacking of our possessions! What a deep hardship that had to befall us, which has been written down in the book of [destiny], already before we encountered it. This is the way of God, so do not grief that which you have lost and do not rejoice over that which you have gained; surely, God do not love the haughty, the flaunting!

And from the heavens you received a punishment as an answer that surrounded you, and some of you will cause hardships for each other. Thereafter, you will receive the eternal painful punishment on the Day of Resurrection, for those you have oppressed; surely, God's damnation is on the oppressors!

Woe upon you, your tribes were the ones to stab us! How could your hearts be persuaded to attack us?! How could your legs run and fight us?! By God, your hearts have hardened, your livers are filled with hate, and the inner parts of your hearts, your hearing, and your sights have been sealed. Satan have tempted you and placed before your eyes darkening veils, so that you may never be guided. Woe upon you, O people of Kufa! What have you kept from that which the Prophet(S) left behind?! And what have you come with other than betrayal of his brother and my grandfather Ali b. Abu Talib(A), his two sons; Hassan(A) and Hossein(A), and his pure and chosen family?! One of your poets boasted of this, reciting,

"We killed Ali and his sons;
With Indian swords and spears

We took their women captives, as slaves;
What a war against them we have steered!"

O poet, be quiet! Are you truly boasting over the killing of the people whom God has purified from all uncleanliness?! How can you boast of this?! Be quiet and cower down [like a dog], like your father did! Every man shall receive that which he has earned and be punished for what he committed! Woe upon you, are you bitter of that which God has characterized us with?! Is it our fault that the sea of our mercy is flowing while your basin is still without waves?! It is a divine favor God bestows upon whomever He wills, and with God is the greatest favor! The one God does not send light to, shall remain without it!"

As Fatima Sughra uttered word after word, the weeping and whimpering among people increased, until they finally exclaimed, "O daughter of the eminent and pure ones, it is enough! Our hearts have ignited, our throats have been burnt, and our souls have been set on fire! " Then, Fatima Sughra remained silent and said no more.

Sermon of Umm Kulthum

One after another, from the household of Imam Ali(A), displayed the inherited eloquence of Imam Ali(A). Their rhetoric was alike a sword cutting through masks and revealing people's true nature.

The daughter of Imam Ali(A), Umm Kulthum, started to speak from the camelback, crying, "O people of Kufa, woe upon you! What happened to you that you betrayed Hossein(A), killed him, ransacked his possessions, took the women from his family as captives, and caused them hardships?! May woe and agony be upon you; are you aware of what catastrophe you have caused?! Are you aware of what heavy weights you have let your backs carry?! Are you aware of which blood you have shed or which honourable women you have insulted?! Or from which girls you have looted?! Or which possessions you have taken over?! You have killed the best of men after the Prophet(S)!
Goodness has left your hearts!"
Thereafter she recited a poem,

"You captured and killed my brother,
May misery befall your mother!
In a flaming fire you shall be,
For the shedding of blood - God, the
Quran, and Mohammad forbid you to
shed, see!
Beware from being burned in the pit of
hellfire!
For my fallen brother I shall weep,
For the best after the Prophet(S), I
shall weep,
With tears wetting the cheeks of mine
A sorrow that shall never seize to be."

By then, and after all these sermons, the audience's feelings burst out. A stir was caused. People shouted,

roared, and bawled. Women ripped their clothes, threw sand over their heads, clawed their faces, dragged their hands over their cheeks, and grieved in distress. Likewise, the men cried uncontrollably, their tears flowing down their wet beards. The way in which people wept had never been witnessed before.

Sermon of Imam Sajjad(A)

Imam Sajjad(A) asked them to be quiet. There was again complete silence. The Imam(A) rose up, praised God, sent peace and blessing upon the Holy Prophet(S), and said, "O people! Those of you who recognize me know me. But for those of you who do not know me, I may present myself. I am Ali, son of Hossein, son of Ali, son of Abu Talib. I am the son of the one whose *horma* (holiness) was overstepped, whose possessions were ransacked, and whose children were taken captives. I am the son of the one who was slaughtered by the Euphrates without amends. I am the son of the one who was captured and martyred, and that by itself is glorious. O people! I swear by God, was it not you who wrote to my father and betrayed him while giving him your promise?! You gave him your word and prolonged your oath of allegiance to him, then you left him and fought him. Woe upon you for what you have afflicted yourselves with! With what eyes will you look at the Messenger of God(S) when he tells you, 'You have killed my family and violated my *horma*, and thus are not a part of my *ummah* (nation)'?!"

When Imam Sajjad(A) reached this part of the sermon, the crowds became unrest, and one said to another, "You destroyed it without knowing it?!"
Imam Sajjad(A) then continued, "May God have mercy on the one who accepts my call; remember my advice regarding God, His Messenger(S), and Ahl al-Bait(A), as we have been given the right path to follow through the Prophet(S)." The crowd shouted, "O son of the Prophet! Surely, we hear you and obey you! We are ready to answer your call and will not turn our backs on you! Give us an order, may God's mercy be upon you! Surely, we fight those who fight you, and are in peace with those you are in peace with! We will capture Yazid, may God's curse be upon him! And we distance ourselves from those who oppressed you!"
The Imam(A) did not seize on their empty words, which they already had shed Imam Hossein's(A) blood with, and replied, "Never, never, O you people of betrayal and insidiousness! Is there no separation between what you desire and yourselves? Do you wish to do with me what you did with my father?! No, by God! The wounds have not healed. Yesterday, my father – peace and blessings be upon him, became martyr alongside his household, and I cannot forget the separation after losing my father and his children. Pain is here; its bitterness is suffocating in the throat; its heavy weight is felt in the chest! For me, it is sufficient that you are not with us and neither against us."
Thereafter, the Imam(A) recited,

"Do not be amazed that Hossein
attained martyrship,

As the one before him attained the
same mastership
O people of Kufa, do not rejoice over
what have occurred,
As his fate is the greatest hearts has
burned.
May my life be sacrificed for him who
close to the river was sacrificed
For his murderer the fire of hell is
scorching hot."

The palace of the Emir

Afterwards, the household of Imam Hossein(A) were taken to Dar-ol-Emarah, the palace of the Emir, where Ibn Ziyad was present. The head of Imam Hossein(A) was placed on a tray before Ibn Ziyad, while the women and children stood before him. Ibn Ziyad pointed at Lady Zaynab and asked, "Who is this woman?"
Someone replied, "Zaynab bt. Ali."
Ibn Ziyad looked at her and said ironically, "What did God do to your brother and family?"
However, Lady Zaynab was not to be degraded. She exclaimed an epic sentence, beyond comprehension and depth. She said, "I have not seen anything but beauty!", then continued, "They [Imam Hossein(A) and his companions] were a party whom God had ascribed martyrdom. They rushed towards the place at which they became martyrs! Surely, God will have them confront you and then you will be held accountable in hard conditions, and then you will realize to whom victory

belong! May your mother grief you, O son of Marjanah!"
When Ibn Ziyad heard this, his face turned red out of anger and he questioned whether he should kill her. Amr b. Hares said, "O master, she is a woman and a woman cannot be punished for her reason!"
Ibn Ziyad replied, "Surely, God has rejoiced my heart by the killing of your rebellious brother, Hossein, and his criminal family!"
Lady Zaynab said, "You have killed my leader, cut my line [branch], and my origins! If this is your joy, then you have reached your goal."
Ibn Ziyad cried out, "This woman expresses herself like a poet! By God, your father was a poet as well!" Lady Zaynab said, "O Ibn Ziyad, what does women have to do with rhythm and poetry?"
Ibn Ziyad then looked at Imam Sajjad(A) and looked at him, a thin frail man who had barely recovered from disease and the long trip, and asked, "Who is he?"
Someone replied, "This is Ali b. Hossein."
Ibn Ziyad asked, "But did God not kill Ali b. Hossein?!"
Imam Sajjad(A) answered, "I had a brother named Ali b. Hossein and he was killed in the hands of the people."
Ibn Ziyad again displayed his distorted view of God; where He was an idol made up with the agendas and interests of the caliphs. He said, "But God killed him!"
However, Imam Sajjad(A) pointed at a fine but important difference, crushing Ibn Ziyad's argument, "In the moment of death, God takes the souls."
Between the lines, the Imam(A) said that they were the ones who caused it and were to be held accountable for

that act causing death, but God is the one Who received the soul in that moment!
Ibn Ziyad roared, "How dare you contradict me?! Bring him here and behead him!"
Here Lady Zaynab came forth, with all the strength of her father Imam Ali(A) in her blood, and exclaimed, "O Ibn Ziyad, you have spared none of us! If you decide on killing him, then kill me as well!"
Imam Sajjad(A) then told his aunt, "O aunt, let me speak to him."
Then the Imam(A) turned towards Ibn Ziyad and said, "Are you trying to frighten me by threatening with death? Do you not know that we are used to martyrdom and that it is a greatness for us?"
Ibn Ziyad glared at them. What a masterly cooperation; Lady Zaynab had filled the role of the leading fiery heart, bedazzling hearts, and Imam Sajjad(A) was the calm reason, alike the light of dawn, still, slow, and quietly dispersing dark clouds. Through their interaction, Imam Sajjad's(A) life was spared before Ibn Ziyad, who, for some not very apparent reason, did not have the heart to kill the Imam(A), even after all he had already done. Instead, he gave orders that they'd be kept in a house nearby the city mosque.
However, the very same Ibn Ziyad, who just now could not kill Imam Sajjad(A), gave orders that the head of Imam Hossein(A), and that all of the martyrs, be paraded through the streets of Kufa. The same head kissed by the Holy Prophet(S) time and again, was now raised on a spear and displayed through the city. One spear after another, one martyr followed by another, one rose following another. All Muslims stood paralyzed as they

kept watching without following up with any action. It was as if their misery had blinded them and hardships numbed them.

Zain b. Arqam stood on his terrace when the parade passed by him. He beheld the head of Imam Hossein(A) on a spear. When it came close to him, he heard it recite the verse of Ashab al-Kahf, the young men who fell asleep in a cave for 309 years to then be resurrected by God:

"Or have you thought that the
companions
of the cave and the inscription were,
among Our signs, a wonder?" (18:9)

Zaid shivered and said, "O son of the Prophet! Your mystery and your mission likewise are stranger [than the men in the cave], yes truly, stranger!"

A strong person

When the parade reached the city mosque and people had gathered around, Ibn Ziyad ascended the pulpit, praised God, and started his sermon, "Praise be to God who revealed the truth and aided Amir al-mo'menin [Yazid] and his followers, bestowed them with victory, and killed the liar, son of the liar..."
All of a sudden, Abdullah b. Ateef Azdi stood up and interrupted Ibn Ziyad. He was a righteous man and a pious Shia who had lost his left eye during the battle of Jamal, and his right eye during the battle of Siffin. He

used to spend his leisure time in the city mosque, worshipping.
He said, "O son of Marjanah! You are the liar, son of a liar, and like the one who gave you power [Yazid], and his father [Mu'awiyah]! O enemy of God! You kill the sons of the Prophet(S) and then utter these words from the pulpit of the Muslims'?!"
Ibn Ziyad asked angrily, "Who is the one uttering these words?!"
Abdullah replied, "O enemy of God! I am speaking to you! Are you killing the children of the Holy Prophet(S) and believe you are following Islam?! O my Lord! Where are the sons of *muhajirin* (migrants – Muslims of Mecca) and *ansar* (aiders – Muslims of Medina) so that they may come and take vengeance on this oppressor; the cursed son of the cursed, such as the Prophet(S) described [him]?"
This increased Ibn Ziyad's anger tenfold such that the veins in his throat were bulging. He squalled, "Bring him to me!" The guards and executioners ran from all sides to catch him. However, the honourable men from his tribe Azd and his family members rushed forward and freed him from the guards' hold, took him out of the mosque, and escorted him home.
Ibn Ziyad shouted, "Catch the blind one! The blind one from the tribe of Azd, whom God has blinded, bring him to me!"
A group of soldiers marched out to bring him in, but the news reached the tribe of Azd who combined forces with the tribes from Yemen in order to protect Abdullah b. Ateef. When Ibn Ziyad heard of this he merged the tribe of Mazar with the family of Mohammad b. Ashath, and

gave order on an attack. All of this escalated to an intense fight where a number of men were killed. The soldiers of Ibn Ziyad went to Abdullah b. Ateef's home, broke in, and attacked him. His daughter said, "They have come as you predicted!"
Abdullah said, "Do not worry. Give me my sword!"
His daughter replied, "O my father! I wish I could fight alongside you against these depraved people who have killed the honourable family members of the Prophet's(S) household!"
Abdullah took hold of his sword and started defending himself, calling, "I am the son of Ateef Taher, the honourable! My father is Ateef and Umm Amer is my mother. How many of you armed soldiers have I not sent to death?"
The enemy surrounded Abdullah from every corner, however no one could disarm him. His daughter led him until he was completely surrounded. She then exclaimed, "What a shame! My father is surrounded and there is no one to help him!"
While Abdullah swung his sword, he said, "By God, if I could see, you would have been destroyed!"
In the end, the soldiers captured Abdullah and took him to Ibn Ziyad. When Ibn Ziyad saw him, he exclaimed, "Praise be to God who has dishonoured you!"
Abdullah b. Ateef replied, "O enemy of God! How have He dishonoured me? If I could see you would surely be in suffering now!"
Ibn Ziyad asked him an insidious question, "What do you think of Uthman b. Affan?"
Abdullah would not be distracted and answered, "O you slave, O son of Marjanah! What have you got to do with

Uthman b. Affan? If he did good or bad, improved or destroyed – God is the witness of His creation! He shall judge justly between people and Uthman. You should ask of yourself and your father, and of Yazid and his father!"
Ibn Ziyad cried out, "No, by God! I will not ask you of anything until you taste death – little by little!"
Abdullah b. Ateef then said, "All praise is due to God, Lord of the worlds. Even before your mother birthed you, I asked God for martyrdom. I wished of Him that the one to take my life would be the worst and most corrupt human of all His creation. After I turned blind, I lost hope of attaining martyrdom. But now, praise to God, I have been bestowed with this blessing, and my prayers have been answered!"
Ibn Ziyad could not take it anymore. He lost control and shouted, "Execute him and hang him in the streets of Kufa!"

News reach Medina

Ibn Ziyad sent word on the events of Karbala and the martyrdom of Imam Hossein(A) to Yazid and the governor of Medina, Amr b. Said b. Aas.
When Amr b. Said b. Aas received the news, he held a sermon and informed people. Bani Hashim were deeply grieved by the news and had mourning ceremonies.

The sister of Muslim b. Aqil, Zaynab bt. Aqil b. Abu Talib, said, "What will you answer when the Holy Prophet(S) asks: You, who is my *ummah* (nation), what have you done to my family after my passing?! Some

you imprisoned and others you killed, whilst covered in their own blood. If I had allowed you to hurt my household, you would have even done worse. O you who have oppressed and killed Hossein, should know that a severe punishment is awaiting you! All in the heavens, and every prophet, messenger, and martyr, cries for him! You are the accursed who has been cursed by Salomon's, Moses's, and Jesus's tongue!"

The bodies are buried

Three days after Ashura, Bani Asad, a tribe residing near Karbala, dared to get closer to the battlefield. In horror they witnessed holy bodies torn apart, looted, headless and laying scattered right and left. They prepared to bury them. As they closed in on Imam Hossein's(A) body, they saw a man approaching them, and they froze. The man said, "Only an Imam can bury another Imam." The elders understood this to be Imam Sajjad(A). Imam Sajjad(A) was imprisoned in Kufa, but had, with the strength of God, done *tay ol-ardh,* and instantaneously moved to Karbala to bury the bodies alongside Bani Asad. It was Imam Sajjad(A) who decided on the placement of the bodies, and with his own hands, buried Imam Hossein(A), placed Ali Asghar in his arms, and Ali Akbar beside his feet.

CHAPTER 5: SHAAM

When Ibn Ziyad's letter reached Yazid, and the event was known to him, he wrote a reply and gave orders that the head of Imam Hossein(A) and that of the martyrs', the women and family members, and the Imam's(A) possessions be sent to him. Ibn Ziyad called Mahaffar b. Thalaba and turned over the heads and all possessions to him. Mahaffar later took the captives on the difficult journey towards Syria.

A journey of nightmares

The distance from Kufa to Damascus is an estimated 900 km. If a person in an adult pace would walk this distance uninterrupted, without pauses, it would take about 180 hours or 7,5 days. However, this time it was not an adult with hiking boots but rather women and small children. It was an Imam who had barely recovered and who carried heavy chains. All were tied together in a long rope with Imam Sajjad(A) on one end and Lady Zaynab on the other. If they walked too slow, so that the children would be able to keep up, they would be hit and beaten. If they increased their pace to avoid the whiplash, the children would fall due to their small feet. They were surrounded of fully armed soldiers, riding their horses and camels. Their view was their fathers', uncles', cousins', and friends' heads. Some hang down from the mounts, some were on spears, some were in bloodstained bags.

One of the soldiers during the transport described the journey as followed: "We were fifty men who carried the holy head of Imam Hossein to Syria. Every night we would place the head in a casket and spend time sipping wine nearby it. During one night my friends were drunk, but I did not drink. As the veils of darkness fell and it was getting lighter, I saw the gate of heaven open and Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ismail, and Prophet Mohammad descend alongside Jibrail, with a group of angels.
Jibrail approached the casket, took out the head, embraced and kissed it. All the other prophets followed. The Prophet cried by the head with the other messengers by his side. Jibrail said, 'O Mohammad! God, the Mighty has commanded me to follow you and your people, and do that which you are doing. If you wish, I can shake the earth, turn it upside down, like I did with the people of Lot!' To which the Prophet replied: 'No Jibrail, I shall meet them on the Day of Judgment before God!'"

Arrival in Damascus

When their caravan approached Damascus, Umm Kulthum went to Shimr and said, "I have a wish." He said, "What do you want?" To which Umm Kulthum replied, "When it is time for us to enter the city, let us enter through a gate in which there are less people. Loosen the heads of the martyrs from the camelbacks and take them further away from us so that people's eyes do not fall on us."

The household of Imam Hossein(A) had arrived in a foreign land, remote from Mecca and Medina, where their greatness was widely known. The region of Syria, that had been in the claws of Mu'awiyah and a huge propaganda tool, had a distorted view of Ahl al-Bait(A). For years they cursed Imam Ali(A) during Friday prayers, and when news of the martyrdom of Imam Ali(A) in Kufa's mosque reached them, they were shocked, and said, "What?! Did Ali even pray?!" The household of Imam Hossein(A) was well-known in Kufa, however now they were to tread into the tyrannical nest among foreigners, and Umm Kulthum wanted to protect the *horma* and holiness of this household.
But Shimr did the opposite and gave orders that the heads of the martyrs be put on spears, which they did. Soldiers holding the spears were given orders to stand among the caravan members and so they held the martyrs' heads on spears before the women and children. In this state they were led to the great gate of Damascus! In this manner, the household of the Prophet(S) were displayed through the city, until they reached the city mosque. An elder man approached the women and children, saying, "Praise is due to God, who killed and freed the earth from your men! Thank God that He let Amir al-mo'menin Yazid prevail over you!"
Then Imam Sajjad(A) calmly and respectfully said to the older man, "O uncle, have you recited the Holy Quran?" The elder said, surprised, "Yes!"
Imam Sajjad(A) said, "Do you know what this verse means: 'Say, [O Moḥammad], "I do not ask you for it [i.e., this message] any payment except love for Thil-qorba [my near household]'(42:23)?"

The elder said, "Yes, I have!"
Imam Sajjad(A) replied, "We are those Thil-qorba! Have you read the following verse: 'And know that whatever thing you gain, a fifth of it is for Allah and for the Messenger and Thil-qorba' (8:41)?"
The man said, "Yes, I have!"
The Imam(A) told him, "We are the Prophet's(S) Thil-qorba [near kin, Ahl al-Bait(A)]! Have you heard this verse: 'Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O Ahl al-Bait, and to purify you with [extensive] purification.' (33:33)?"
The old man answered, "Yes, I have heard it!"
The Imam(A) then said, "O uncle, we are the Ahl al-Bait whom God the Exalted have elevated through this verse!"
The old man turned quiet for a moment. He lowered his head and dwelled into deep thoughts. Then he looked up at the Imam(A) and said,
"By God, tell me, are you truly Ahl al-Bait?"
Imam Sajjad(A) replied, "By God, yes we are! I swear on my great grandfather, Prophet Mohammad(A), that we are Ahl al-Bait without any doubt!"
The elder's tears started flowing down. He threw his turban on the ground, raised his head up towards the sky, and exclaimed, "O God, I hate the enemies of the household of Prophet Mohammad(S), among both djinn and men!"
Then he turned towards Imam Sajjad(A) and asked, "Is the door of regret open for me?"
The Imam(A) said, "Yes, if you are regretful and ask God for forgiveness, He will accept your regret and you will be with us!"

The old man called, "I am regretful, I am regretful!" Yazid then heard of this old man. He gave orders to capture and kill him. The old man attained martyrdom in his newfound love for Ahl al-Bait(A)!

Another pious man saw the head of Imam Hossein(A) on a spear. After this sight he withdrew from everyone for one whole month. When his kin later found him, they asked for the reason for his disappearance. He told them, "Have you seen what has afflicted us?!" Then he recited,

"O son of the Prophet! They brought
your head
drowned in blood
Killing you was killing the Prophet,
this they knowingly did
Still, they murdered you thirsty,
the holy words of God they
overlooked
Allaho-o-Akbar they shouted, but
Takbir was
beheaded in cold blood"

In the court of the Caliph

The household of Imam Hossein(A) were brought forth to the caliph with tied hands. They stood before Yazid b. Mu'awiyah b. Abu Sufyan in this state. Imam Sajjad(A) said to Yazid, "By God, what do you think the Prophet(S) would say if he saw us in this state?!" Yazid gave orders that their hands be untied and that the women be led behind him, so that they would not look at

him. Thereafter, he ordered that the head of Imam Hossein(A) be placed before him. As Imam Sajjad's(A) eyes fell upon the head of his father, he felt sorrow and grief. When Lady Zaynab saw her brother's head she cried with a sorrowful sound that had everyone's hearts shaken. She cried out, "O Hossein! O beloved of God's messenger! O son of Mecca and Medina! O son of Fatima Zahra, leader of all women! O grandson of Mostafa!"

One person in court witnessed "By God, all attended started weeping and Yazid could not make him heard!"

One of Bani Hashim's women started crying and exclaimed: "O Hossein! O beloved! O Seyyed! O chief of Ahl al-Bait! O son of Mohammad(S)! O hope and protector of women and orphans without guardians! O you who have been murdered by illegitimates!"

The order of the court collapsed. Everyone was in tears. Yazid asked for a whip, and angrily stroke the lips of Imam Hossein(A). Abu Barzah Aslami turned to Yazid and said, "Woe upon you Yazid! Are you striking the lips of Hossein, the son of Fatima?! I am a witness that the Prophet(S) would kiss the lips of Hossein and Hassan, saying, 'These two are the masters of paradise's youth! May God kill and curse those who kill them, and He has prepared hell for their murderers! What a miserable end!"

Yazid was infuriated. He gave orders to capture Abu Barzah and take him away. Thereafter, Yazid started reciting poetry by the anti-Islamic poet Ibn Zabari:

I wish my fallen seniors
*in **BADR** witnessed*

The cries and deep sorrows
*of **KHAZRAJ***
Now rise, look happily and say:
O Yazid! May your hands never be
paralyzed, nay!
We have killed their leader now
And avenged a worthy vengeance for
Badr now
The Hashimites seeked only power
Neither revelation or message God has
sent
I am not the son of my tribe
If I do not slaughter the sons of Ahmad
like lamb

Sermon of Lady Zaynab

Then, Zaynab stood up again and started speaking words that hade fragrance like that of her father's, Imam Ali's(A) striking wisdom. With her sublime rhetoric, she ignited the whole palace with flames. She said, with complete strength, "Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds! Blessings upon Mohammad and his family! Surely, God spoke truth when He said, '***Then evil was the end of***
those who did evil because they rejected the communications of Allah and used to mock them.' (30:10)
O Yazid! Are you boastful that you have brought us here as captives and made us stand before you as slaves?! Do you believe that you can be joyous over this world you have built for yourself?! You believe everything has

come together to your advantage, that your land and your reign are at your disposal! Take your time as your relief will not last for long. You have forgotten God's words:
'The unbelievers should not carry the impression that the time allowed to them by us is good for them. Surely, we give them time so that they may increase their evil deeds, and eventually they will be given insulting chastisement' (3:178)

Is this fair, O son of freed slaves! Is this your justice that your women and slave maids are veiled from the public while the daughters of God's Messenger(S) are brought forth as slaves before everyone?! You have removed their veils, uncovered their faces, and taken them from one town to another like enemies! You have degraded them before the public. You have made people glance at them while their guardians and protectors are absent. What is to be expected other than this by the son of the woman who chewed the liver of the pious people?! Of one whose flesh has been fed with the blood of martyrs?! How can a person stoop so low out of malice against us Ahl al-Bait(A)?! Then without realization, express such wicked words that your seniors rise in joy, and tell you: 'O Yazid! May your hands never be paralyzed, nay!' whilst you are striking the lips of Aba Abdullah(A)! Why would you not say that you have shed the blood of Mohammad's(S) progeny, the shining stars on earth. By this you have carried them to the dark. Now, remember your ancestors and call upon them.
O Yazid! Soon you shall be reunited with your ancestors. On that day you will say, 'Woe upon me; I

wish I had been paralyzed and never expressed what I have, nor done what I did!'
O God! Revive our right and take vengeance on those who have oppressed us, send Your wrath upon those who shed our blood and killed our protector!
O Yazid! By God, you have not killed anyone but yourself and sliced nothing but your own flesh! Without doubt, you will be held accountable before the Prophet of God(S) for spilling the blood of his progeny and dishonouring his family. This will occur in a time and place where God will gather them, remove their worry, and revive their right.
'And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allah, 'They are dead.' Rather, they are alive, but you perceive [it] not.'(2:154)
O Yazid! It is sufficient that God is the Judge and Mohammad(S) is your enemy and avenger of this blood, and Jibrail is supporting him! Those who have paved the way for you and enforced the caliphate to pass down to you, will soon know 'What a terrible deal was made by the oppressors', and whom of you possess a worse place, and with least help!
O Yazid! If I had not been afflicted with these difficulties, I would not even speak to you! I perceive you to be less than someone who is to be addressed. To reproach means giving you importance and blaming you is of greater value than that of your worth! But eyes are now tearful and hearts are in pain.
How strange it is; the killing of virtuous people from the party of God by liberated people from the party of Satan! How our blood drips from your filthy hands. How our flesh is chewed by your filthy mouths. How holy bodies

are attacked by wolves and hyenas, shredded apart. If you have taken us as spoils of war, it will soon be shown to be a punishment, as it is ***'That is for what your hands have put forth and because Allah is not ever unjust to [His] servants.' (3:182)***. To God we repose our hope, He alone is our relief and support!

You may contrive and try how much ever you like! By God, you will never erase our name or remove our revelation. This stain of shame will never be removed off you. Your stand is hollow, your days numbered, and your gathered forces will soon be shattered. Yes, soon the day shall come when it will be called:

'***Unquestionably, the curse of Allah is upon the wrongdoers!' (11:18)***

All praise is due to God who ordained salvation and blessings upon our predecessors, and martyrdom and mercy upon our successors.

We plead to God to perfect their reward and increase the followers of their path, and bestow upon us the divine caliphate. Surely, He is the Beneficent, the Benevolent, and God suffices us, and He is the best Defender!

Dark side of the court

Yazid recited,

"Complaints of the complainers sound lovely
But insignificant if the criers are killed horrendously"

Afterwards, Yazid asked his court on what to do with Ahl al-Bait(A). His courtiers said, "Treat them like dogs!"
No'man b. Bashir said, "Act like the Holy Prophet(S) used to."

One of the men looked at the daughter of Imam Hossein(A), Fatima Sughra, and said, "O emir! Give me this girl!"
Fatima Sughra then said to her aunt Lady Zaynab, "I have become fatherless, am I to be enslaved too?!"
Lady Zaynab said, "No! This low man has no shame!"
The man then asked, "Who is this girl?"
Yazid replied, "She is Fatima, daughter of Hossein, and this is Zaynab, daughter of Ali."
The man exclaimed, "Hossein, the son of Fatima and Ali b. Abu Talib?!
Yazid said, "Yes!"
The man said, "May God curse you, O Yazid! You have slaughtered the progeny of the Prophet and taken his children as captives?! By God, I believed them to be among the nonbelieving war captives!"
Yazid was furious, he said, "By God, I will count you among them!"
He then commanded him to be arrested and killed.

Later, Yazid gave orders to bring a speaker and then ordered him to curse Imam Hossein(A) and his father(A). The speaker ascended the pulpit and cursed Amir al-mo'menin Ali b. Abu Talib(A) and Imam Hossein(A). He then proceeded to praise Mu'awiyah and Yazid, excessively. Imam Sajjad(A) then called, "O

speaker! You have bought creation's pleasure by causing the wrath of God! Surely, the fire of hell will be your abode!"

The Syrian poet, Abdullah b. Sinan al-Khafaji, from 11th century, narrated this in a striking way while describing the way in which Islam lived by the struggle of Imam Ali(A):

In mosques him who is affable you curse,
Whose pillar from his sword could arise!

Sakina's dream

Yazid gave orders for Ahl al-Bait(A) to be kept prisoners in the ruins outside the palace, neither protecting them from the scorching heat at daytime nor the freezing cold at nighttime. They stayed there until the skin on their faces peeled off. Nonetheless, they continued to mourn Imam Hossein(A) during their stay in Damascus. On the fourth day of their visit, Sakina had a dream. Sakina was the older sister of Ali Asghar, younger than Fatima Sughra. Her name was actually Amena, however her mother Robab named her Sakina (peaceful) as she was so calm and harmonious. This nickname followed her throughout her life. Sakina was always happy, harmonious, social, spread joy, and brightened up the mood. Sakina, the beloved daughter of Imam Hossein(A). whom he would constantly express his love for by saying things like, "By my life, I love a house in which Sakina and Robab are!" What did Sakina witness that completely changed her?! She spent the remaining

time of her life in sorrow, sermons, lectures, and spreading the tragedy of Karbala. Her poetry on Ashura was so burning that the caliphate could not tolerate her much longer, and so sent her to exile alongside Lady Zaynab and Fatima Sughra, from Medina to Egypt.
Now young Sakina was in Damascus's ruins and had dreamt a bewildering dream. She said, "I saw a woman on a camelback with her hand on her head. I asked her whom she was. It was said she is Lady Fatima, daughter of the Prophet. I said I will go and tell her everything that had befallen us! So, I ran to her, stood by her, cried and said, "O my mother! By God, they denied our right and scattered our gathering! O mother, they dishonoured us! O mother, by God, they killed my father!"
Lady Fatima Zahra answered, "O Sakina! Calm down my dear! Your words break my heart into pieces! This is the cloth of your father Hossein and it will stay with me until I meet God [on Judgement Day]!"

The Christian ambassador from Rome

Imam Sajjad(A) narrates that when they had brought the head of Imam Hossein(A) to Yazid, he arranged many gatherings where he placed the head nearby him and got drunk.

During one of those parties, a Christian ambassador, who was a noble man from Rome, attended. He told Yazid, "O king of Arabia, whose head is this?"
Yazid replied, "It does not concern you!"
The ambassador said, "When I return to my homeland the emperor will inquire me of all that I have seen. I

wish to tell him of the history behind this head so that he may share your joy."
Yazid said, "This is the head of Hossein, son of Ali b. Abu Talib."
The ambassador asked, "And whom may his mother be?"
Yazid replied, "Fatima, daughter of Prophet Mohammad!"
The ambassador was shocked. He cried out, "Damn you and your faith! My faith is better than yours – my father is from the progeny of prophet David and his family, and it is a long period of time between them and I; still the Christians respect me and pluck earth from the places I have stepped on as a blessing, just because I am one of the descendants of prophet David! But you kill the son of your Prophet's daughter, while the distance between him and your Prophet is only a mother?! What kind of faith do you follow?!"
The ambassador continued, "Have you heard the story of Hafir's church?"
Yazid replied, "No?"
The ambassador said, "There is an ocean between Oman and China. It is a six-month long journey to sail through. There is no habitable place in-between except an island in the middle of the ocean. This island is 800 km in length and 800 km in width. No city on earth is as sublime as this place. Camphor and rubies are exported from there. It is under Christian authority and their king is also Christian. There are many churches there and the greatest of them all is Hafir's. On its altar, there is a small gold box with a clover mark. It is said that it is the impression of the clover of the donkey Jesus rode. They

have decorated it with a golden frame and brocade. Every day, a great number of Christians come to visit, circulate, kiss, and stand close to it and ask God the Almighty to answer their prayers. This honour and tradition relate to the clover of Jesus's donkey and its place in which, according to them, a clover of the donkey their prophet used to ride, is found. And you kill the son of your Prophet's daughter. God will neither bless you nor your faith!"
Yazid was infuriated and ordered, "Kill this Christian man so that he will not disgrace us in his own land!"
When the Christian man realized what Yazid intended, he asked, "Do you want to kill me?"
Yazid said, "Yes!"
Then the Christian ambassador said, "You ought to know that I saw you Prophet in my dream this past night and he told me, 'O Christian man! You are a man who belong in Paradise!' I was quite surprised by his words. Now I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Mohammad is His Messenger!"
Then he ran to the head of Imam Hossein(A), embraced and kissed it, and while in this state attained martyrdom!

Meeting in Damascus's marketplace

Imam Sajjad(A) was taken to the marketplace in Damascus. There, a Shia named Minhal b. Amr, hurried to the Imam(A) to welcome him; he said, "O son of God's Prophet(S)! How did you spend your night?"
The Imam(A) replied, "Like the children of Bani Israel caught by the people of Pharaoh, who killed their sons and kept their daughters. O Minhal, Arabs pride

themselves over non-Arabs because Prophet Mohammad(S) is one of them, and Quraysh pride themselves over other Arab tribes because Prophet Mohammad(S) is one of them. Yet still, as the household of the Prophet(S), we are homeless, tortured, and murdered. So, '***Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return' (2:156)*** for all that has befallen us, Minhal!"

Mayhar b. Marziyyah was a Persian poet in the 11th century who lived in Baghdad and had converted to Islam with the help of Sharif Radhi (composer of Nahjul Balagha), who also became his teacher and mentor. Mayhar's poetry was powerful and novel. He narrates the words of Imam Sajjad(A) by the following lines:

Pillars of the Prophet's pulpit they
praise,
While his children below their feet
they
curse,
Why is his children to follow you,
When your pride is to follow him?!

Hearts turn

Yazid ordered the head of Imam Hossein(A) to be hung on the palace gates. He wanted to be boastful before his household and display the holy head as a trophy. However, as the women of his household entered the hall and beheld Imam Hossein's(A) head, they were deeply grieved and wept. They kept away from royal

clothes to instead wear black in mourning robes for three days. When the people of Damascus had realized whom Ahl al-Bait(A) were, whose head hung on the gates, and when they established contact with the household of Imam Hossein(A), witnessed their sublimity and honour, they abandoned their homes and mourned openly in the streets.
When Yazid's own wife, Hind, realized her husband had killed Imam Hossein(A), she rushed into the courtroom, not fully covered, and cried out, "O Yazid! Is it the head of Imam Hossein you have hung on the gate?!"
Rushing, Yazid approached her to cover her and glozed, "Yes, Hind! Cry and mourn the grandchild of the Prophet! All of Quraysh is mourning him! Ibn Ziyad instigated and killed him! May God kill him!"

When people realized Ahl al-Bait's(A) status and brutality of Yazid's crime, they started turning against him. However, he began to acquit himself of murdering Imam Hossein(A) and openly blamed Ibn Ziyad, all the while showering him with gifts, getting drunk with him, and calling him his conspiring companion. He would continue to curse him before the public eye and proceeded to move Ahl al-Bait(A) from the ruins to the palace. He did that in order to secure his hold of the throne and silence any riot.

Roqayya withers away

One night, Yazid was awoken by unending concerning cries. They belonged to the three-year old daughter of Imam Hossein(A), Roqayya. She had awoken from her

sleep, calling, "Where is my father Hossein?! Where is my father?! I dreamed of him and he was worried and upset!"
Roqayya's emotional state left all women and children in loud cries. When Yazid was informed of it, he told the guards to give the head of Imam Hossein(A) to her so that she would be quiet.
As ordered, they took the head, wrapped in cloth, and placed it beside Roqayya. She wrapped it up, saw the head, and screamed while caressing her cheeks against his, kissed his lips, embraced him, and wept. Then she calmed down and slept, without ever waking up again. Roqayya's soul had left her body that moment and reunited with her father's. She was buried in Damascus.

Three wishes by Imam Sajjad(A)

Yazid promised to accept three wishes proposed by Imam Sajjad(A) so he said, "Say three things so that I can accept them as I promised."
Imam Sajjad(A) said, "Firstly, show me my father's head so I may look at him and bid farewell. Secondly, everything confiscated from us is to be returned. And thirdly, if you intend to kill me, allow someone to accompany the women and bring them back to their grandfather's [Prophet's(S)] shrine in Medina."
Yazid, the deceitful, said, "You will never see your father's head. I do not want to kill you. And no one other than you will accompany the women back to Medina! I am prepared to give you the worth the possessions that has been taken from you, and equally as indemnity!"

The Imam(A) replied, "I do not need your money; they are of importance only for you! I only demand that which has been looted from us, as they include clothes stitched by Fatima, daughter of the Prophet(S). And also, her scarf, clothes, and necklace. So, give orders for these to be returned."
Imam Sajjad(A) convinced Yazid to order the return of Ahl al-Bait's(A) possessions, alongside 200 dinar of which Imam Sajjad(A) distributed among the poor and needy. Imam Sajjad subsequently convinced Yazid to hand over the head of Imam Hossein(A), so that he would bury it alongside Imam Hossein's(A) body. Thereafter, Yazid allowed them to return to Medina.

CHAPTER 6: ARBAIN

The remainder of Imam Hossein's(A) caravan could finally leave Damascus and return back home. They set course towards Medina, through Karbala. With them, they carried the martyrs' heads.
Another small caravan had also separately initiated a course towards Karbala. It consisted of the Prophet's(S) old and now blind companion, Jabir b. Abdullah al-Ansari, 80 years of age. And alongside him another of Imam Ali's(A) companions joined, 25-year-old Attiya b. Sa'd al-Awfi. When news of Imam Hossein's(A) martyrdom reached Medina, and people mourned and arranged mourning ceremonies, Jabir had another thought. A strong feeling in his heart pushed him to voluntarily leave everything and everyone behind to head towards Karbala and walk to his Imam(A). Jabir was no ***Ma'soom*** (infallible) and had no family affiliation with Ahl al-Bait(A). He was merely a common man. His sublimity lay in his deep affection and following of the Prophet(S) and present Imams(A). Still, this elderly blind Jabir began walking to Karbala alongside Atiyyah b. Sa'd.
Jabir and Atiyyah arrived to Karbala on the 40th day after the events of Ashura, the so called Arbain. Attiyah narrates that when they reached Karbala, Jabir went to Euphrates and performed ***ghusl*** (full ablution). Thereafter, he perfumed himself and proceeded to Imam Hossein's(A) grave in a special manner. Jabir sent his ***salam*** to Imam Hossein(A) and cried, saying, "O my master! Why do I salute you while you do not answer my greeting?!"

How did Jabir know of these ***adaab*** and these proceedings?! Who told him to make ***ghusl***?! How did he distinguish Imam Hossein's(A) grave from everyone else's?! Sometimes, God Himself reveal a special inspiration to His servant's heart, and it results in great things, would they act upon it. Jabir, with his steps and his way, set a foundation on that which would become the march of Arbain, to which we today witness its display by millions every year!
The caravan of Imam Hossein(A) arrived during Jabir's and Atiyyah's first ***ziyarah*** of Imam Hossein(A) on Arbain. The two caravans submerged, meeting and greeting each other, with heartbreaking words. When hearing of Imam Hossein's(A) household's return, women in the surrounding desert tribes joined mourning ceremonies and wept alongside them. They also heard ***djinn*** visit Imam Hossein's(A) death place during nighttime, weeping.

Medina

After a couple of days, Ahl al-Bait(A) left Karbala heading towards Medina. When reaching the outskirts of Medina, Imam Sajjad(A) stopped their caravan and set up a camp. He told Boshr b. Hathlam, "O Boshr! Your father, may God have mercy on him, was a poet. Can you also recite poetry?"
Boshr replied, "Yes, O son of God's Messenger(S)! I am a poet!"
The Imam(A) said, "Go to Medina and announce Imam Hossein's(A) martyrdom."

Boshr mounted his horse and hurried to Medina. When he reached the Holy Prophet's(S) mosque, he raised his voice and recited:

"O people of Medina! Medina has
reached its end!
Hossein is slaughtered and my tears
have
no end!
His body, covered in his own blood,
lays
in Karbala, north fare!
His holy head taken from one place to
another,
on a spear!"

Boshr continued to point towards Imam Sajjad's(A) camp, "There is Ali b. Hossein(A) alongside his aunts and sisters, close to Medina. I am his messenger to inform you of his location."
All women rushed without outer coverings, crying out and hitting themselves on their cheeks. They wept loudly out of grief. No one witnessed such cries and grief among Muslim men and women since the demise of the Prophet(S). Boshr narrates, "I beheld a girl mourning Imam Hossein(A), reciting:

"A messenger recited of my master,
sorrowful
I turned sick of how it was all so very
painful
O my eyes! Cry day and night

For the beloved one whose tragedy
God's throne
trembled
Behold this honour and religion sink
For the Prophet's son and his
successor, cry
Even if he is in a faraway land, cry!"

Then she told me, 'O messenger of death! You have renewed our sorrow by sharing news of Aba Abdullah, Imam Hossein's death! You have rubbed salt in our unhealed wounds! May God's mercy be upon you, who are you!'
I replied, "I am Boshr b. Hatham. My master Ali b. Hossein has sent me. He has set up a camp on the outskirts of Medina with his family.'

Sermon of Imam Sajjad(A) addressing people of Medina

People left Boshr and rushed to the outskirt of Medina. Boshr mounted his horse and followed them. People gathered close to the road and surrounded it. Boshr got off his horse and walked through the masses in order to reach Imam Sajjad's(A) camp, who was in his tent. He came out holding a wet towel, wiping his tears. A servant followed him carrying a chair, placed it and Imam Sajjad(A) sat on it. He could not hold back his tears, and alongside him people wept and cried. They tried to comfort him, while it felt as if their country wailed in heartbreaking grief. Finally, Imam Sajjad(A)

signaled with his hand and asked for silence, so the cries quieted.
He then proceeded to say, "All praise and gratitude is due to God, Lord of the worlds, the Merciful, the Beneficent, Master of the Day of Judgement, Creator of all creation. He who is so far away that He is beyond the highest heavens, and so close He witnesses the quietest of whispers. We praise and thank Him for the greatness of the event, and tragedy of all time, and the pain of grief, and its crushing hardships and toil.
O people! All praise is due to God who has tested us through this great hardship and breach in Islam. Aba Abdullah Hossein(A) was killed, alongside his household and companions. His women and children were taken captives. My father's head was fixed on a spear and shown around one place after the other. This tragedy is unlike any other.
O people! Who among you can be joyous ever again?! Which heart is not saddened for his sake?! Whom among you can prevent their tears?!
Surely, the seven heavens are crying over his martyrdom, as well as the oceans with their waves, skies with their pillars, earth with its expansion, and trees with their branches, and fishes and depth of seas, all close angels and all inhabitants of heaven!
O people! Which heart is not ripped apart by his death?! What soul is not yearning in his absence?! What ear hears of this heart-rending tragedy of Islam without turning numb?!
O people! We were expelled, hunted, taken to exile, defenselessly shown in city after city, alike that to children of slaves. This happened without us committing

a crime, a disliked act, or even harming Islam. Never have we heard of this from our fathers. By God, if the Holy Prophet(S) had asked them to fight us, instead of honouring and following us as he did, they would not have done worse than this. Therefore, surely, we belong to God and to Him we shall return, from a tragedy so severe, painful, brutal, cruel, crushing, and heavy! To God we turn for what has befallen us, for He is indeed the Glorious Avenger!"

Thereafter, Imam Sajjad(A) stepped into Medina alongside his household. No one could cover their emotions. Great sorrow filled Medina while Ahl al-Bait(A) cried for Imam Hossein(A) and his companions. They wept like a mother over her lost child and wailed out of devastation.

Imam Sajjad's(A) state following the events of Karbala

Even though Imam Sajjad(A) was highly prominent in perseverance and diligence, he would cry greatly over Karbala's tragedy. Imam Sadiq(A) narrates that his grandfather Imam Sajjad(A) cried over his father for more than 40 years. He would fast during the day and worship during the night.
When servants brought him food and water in time to break his fast, he would remember the tragedy, and when they would ask him to eat, his tears would fall and he would say, "They killed the Holy Prophet's(S) son hungry; they killed him thirsty." He would repeat these mourning verses and cry until his food turned damp due

to his tears. This was Imam Sajjad's(A) state until his final day.

A servant narrates that Imam Sajjad(A) once went to the desert. He followed him and found him in a state of *sujood* (forehead on ground in worship). He stood closer to him and heard his cries. The Imam(A) would repeat this *thikr* (words invoking God) a thousand times, "*La ilaha illa Allah-o haqq-an haqq-a; la ilaha illa Allah-o oboodiyya-tan riqq-a; la ilaha illa Allah-o iman-an wa tasdiq-a"* (There is no deity save God, I witness surely in truth; there is no deity save God, I witness as a servant in submission; no god deity save God, I witness with faith and righteousness.)

Then he lifted his head, his face and beard wet with tears, as his servant asked him, "O my Master! Has not the time come for you to end your grief and tears?!" Imam Sajjad(A) replied, "What are you saying?! Jacob, son of Isaac, son of Abraham, was both a prophet and son of a prophet, and grandson of a prophet; he had twelve sons. God, the Mighty, kept one of his sons, Joseph, away from him. Due to this, his hair turned white out of sorrow and loss, his back hunched and he turned blind from his continued tears, while his son was still alive! However, I saw with my own eyes how my father, my brothers, and 17 of my family members became martyrs! How then will my heart's sorrow cease and my tears end?!"

EPILOGUE

We started off with this book on the first of Muharram, 2020. It is solely based on two authentic original sources of *maqtal*, narrations of Karbala's tragedy. These two historical works are: "Maqtal al-Hossein", the first maqtal-book written by Abu Mikhaf in the 10th century, and "Lohoof" written by Sayyed Ibn Tawoos in the 13th century.

The journey of this book was like that of Imam Hossein's(A) caravan; a journey through time and space, through days and nights, surrounding people's destinies, darkness and light. It was completed just like Jabir's travel, on Arbain of 2020. There is much to say, many lives to dive into, more questions to ask. In the end, many questions might be derived back to the prologue; the meeting of *aql*, intellect, and *ishq*, love. Some acted against their reason and were cursed. Others acted according to it and were saved. Some had their reason clouded by doubt and desires, and acted in sheen of intellect, but still went astray. A small party, however, acted according to their elevated reason and love, who left their contemporaries astonished and generations to come in wonder.

Ashura was a tragedy in where an assembly of courageous heroes were completely dissolved with the Imam of their time and who gave their lives in the bloodiest battle of all time in human history. However, this blood paved the way for the purification and evolving journeys that are still ongoing today. As of today, we behold a worldwide Hosseini-culture in which men reach the highest point of their humanity. We, who

live today, were not created for Ashura, but for Arbain - to follow Jabir's path, intuitively allow *ishq* to lead us, find our own path to our Imam(AJ) and to evolve on this journey.

Where am I to go?
When love is both the pain and way, lo!
When unsaid words extract all air
When the whole world without you is a cage of flare
What am I to do with my eyes?
When you are the path and I stand paralyzed?
When all call out your beautiful name
I dream of your warm embrace to claim
How many times will nafs be broken?
When one salam from you is enough bespoken?
How many valleys am I to be dragged through?
Where is the sun, giving inner light, hidden to?
How many stars are to fall?
When is earth to be purified and heaven to pleadingly pray?
When will all drops become one sea?
When is the divine caliphate to be?
How many days are to pass without thee?
Are we to be less or more?

You are the only epitome of humanity,
evermore
How can mud without harakah reach
the source of all barakah?
How is the spirit to lead the muddy
hand?
It cannot
If not
Mud is given life
Negative turns positive
Was it rooh God blew in?
Or was it ishq that created all spin?
Aql teaches an ignorant fine rhyme
But ishq turns the poor to karim
Aql discerns wrong from right
But ishq turns darkness to light
All that is needed is a Roohani meeting
All obstacles and routines will be
retreating
But when you have drunk your bowl
Another sip is your only goal
Life does not have another meaning or
plea
Except one complete purification, see
A river flows out into the sea
To whom God gave all of His
attributes to be